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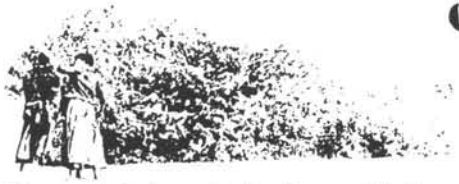

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Theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial office
16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY
Telephone 01-251 4406

Editor Martin Jacques

Editorial board
Irene Brennan, Jack Cohen, Dan Connor, John Foster, Jean Gardiner, Eric Hobsbawn, John Hoffman, Alan Hunt, Arnold Kettle, Betty Matthews, Bert Pearce, Dave Priscott, Bob Rowthorn, Mike Seifert, Dave Wynn.

Reviews John Kelly

Channel Five Sally Townsend

Advertising Sally Townsend

Circulation Dave Grant

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FOCUS

EUROPEAN PEACE MOVEMENT

At the end of October, over a million people demonstrated in Europe against the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Europe. Immediately, Caspar Weinburger and George Bush denied that the peace movements were representative, and announced that they would take no notice of them. In fact it is clear that the Americans are worried about the situation in Europe, and it may be that in the near future we will see, at least superficially, some modification in US policy towards its European allies.

The first European peace movement to really become the focus of international attention was the Dutch 'Stop the Neutron Bomb' campaign in 1977. Since then there has been a series of exploding popular campaigns against nuclear weapons in Europe; the Belgians got themselves organised in 1978, CND took off in Britain from the beginning of 1980, the West Germans, focusing on the Krefelder Appel, really started to mobilise from the beginning of 1981, and very recently, Italians have joined in the movement. There have been specific conditions for the timing of the growth in each country, but there has also been a strong snowball element, with newer campaigns being encouraged by previous successes in other countries. There is a strong consciousness that each national campaign is part of a wider European movement.

So when NATO ministers meet in Brussels in December, to review the progress of Cruise and Pershing deployment in Europe, it will be in the knowledge that there is now a mass popular movement opposing deployment in each of the five countries that are scheduled to take the weapons.

The most established movement — Stop the Neutron Bomb, and the IKV (Inter Church Peace Council) in the Netherlands — has also been the most successful in concretely influencing government policy. This is partly because the Dutch system of proportional representation, with its ensuing coalition governments, is more accountable to popular opinion than, for example, our own two party system. The Stop the Neutron Bomb Campaign in particular has been very skilful in building alliances that transcend political parties, with the result that all three parties that form the present government coalition — the Christian Democrats, Democratic Liberals (D 66), and the Social Democrats — in some measure oppose the siting of Cruise missiles in the Netherlands. The campaign against the missiles influenced the outcome of the May elections in the Netherlands, with a swing towards the anti-nuclear parties. The Dutch government is now Centre-Left, replacing a previous Centre-Right coalition. The coalition has still not decided its exact negotiating position for the December meeting, but all commentators agree that, at the very least, the Dutch will call for a further postponement of their decision for two years.

The Belgians watch the Dutch very closely, being in a very similar situation. They are likely to adopt the same position as the Dutch in Brussels. The Norwegians and Danes have always refused the peacetime siting of nuclear weapons in their countries. So there will be four countries at the December meeting who, at governmental level, are in some way opposed to the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe.

On the surface this is a similar situation to the 1979 NATO meeting that took the initial decision to deploy the weapons, based on an uneasy consensus (NATO decisions are always the result of consensus). But there are important differences. Firstly, the consensus in 1979 was partly achieved by avoiding confrontation with the Dutch and Belgians; they were allowed to postpone their decision. Two years later, postponement begins to take the character of refusal. Secondly, it is clear that the situation in Europe is not static. Pressure against the weapons is growing in other Western European countries. The Dutch and Belgian governments are responding to domestic popular pressure. Given the chronological development of the European peace movements, other European governments may begin to shift their position

In this context, the spotlight shifts to West Germany. Helmut Schmidt has never been an unequivocal supporter of the new missile deployment. He has always maintained that the deployment must be accompanied by arms control negotiations. During the last two years he has been involved in a variety of diplomatic initiatives to achieve talks between the superpowers. The talks due to take place in Geneva in November between the US and the USSR are considered by him to be a personal success. His position, however, has not been strengthened by the activities of the Reagan administration. In particular, the announcements on neutron bomb production, and the casual reference to the possibilities of limited nuclear war in Europe, have added to the momentum of the peace movement in West Germany. 60 SPD deputies supported the Bonn march in October, and it is possible that SPD policy on nuclear weapons could be overturned at the party's next Congress in April 1982. Schmidt will be under considerable pressure from his party, and the mass movement, if nothing comes of the November talks.

In Italy and Britain the movement is ever growing, with results as yet unpredictable; it all adds up to a worrying situation in Europe for the Americans. Their response at present seems to be to make some concessions, at least in words, to their allies. They have realised, as a *Washington Post* editorial expressed it, that 'the Reagan administration has been addressing the Russians in the idiom of American Conservatives, without much concern for another very attentive audience in Western Europe'.

It is the European response to their policies, rather than Schmidt's diplomacy, that has brought the Americans to the negotiating table in Geneva. It remains to be seen whether we are witnessing better public relations from the Americans, or a genuine shift in their position. But it is clear that the European peace movement is now a force to be reckoned with in the international arena. The growth and direction of this movement will continue to influence NATO policy.

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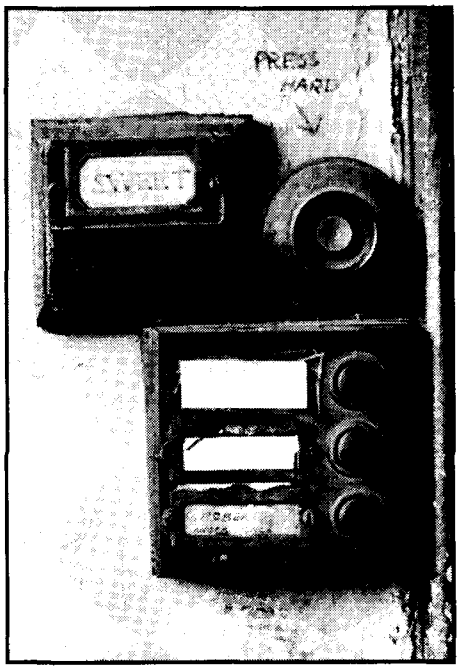
PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING

Perhaps the most striking characteristic about the present Tory government is its inability to admit defeat when staring it in the face. Housing Minister John Stanley's attitude towards reviving the private rented housing sector appears to be as blinkered as Geoffrey Howe's faith in monetarism reviving the British economy. Shorthold tenancies, the bait introduced in the 1980 Housing Act to entice wayward landlords back into the rented housing market, has not resulted in the anticipated lemming-like rush. Landlords seem able to resist the temptation. From the 220,000 empty properties in the private rented sector in England identified in the 1980 Vacant Property Survey, only 1,457 had been converted into shortholds by the end of April this year — less than 1%! More recent figures are unavailable, but judging by the Government's recent actions, they are undoubtedly low.

Rather than accept defeat and face the fact that the private rental sector does not have the economic will or capacity for expansion, the Government has made a desperate attempt to salvage the scheme. From December 1, 1981, the last real remaining measure of tenant protection — the requirement to register a 'fair' rent at the start of a shorthold tenancy — is to be removed (London is excluded from the change, although the landlord's lobby is already pressing for its inclusion).

The lifting of the rent registration requirement comes on top of the regressive measures already included in the shorthold provisions. The most important of these is the removal of a tenant's right to indefinite security of tenure, and its replacement by fixed-term tenancies of between 1-5 years. In practice, this means that landlords can automatically gain possession of their property at the end of the fixed term, without recourse to the courts and without regard for their tenant's circumstances. Taken together, the curtailment of tenants' security rights and the introduction of privately agreed rents represents a move towards the adoption of a free market strategy for the private rented housing sector. This contrasts sharply with the Tories' initial reason for introducing shortholds — as a measure to increase the supply of private rented housing, without opening the door to tenant exploitation. The removal of the 'fair' rent safeguard reveals the dishonesty of their approach.

It is perhaps ironic that the desperation channelled into *increasing* the amount of private rented housing, is only matched by the government's enthusiasm to *reduce* the amount of public rented housing. No one



can now have any illusions that the Tory government is interested in providing decent housing at prices people can afford. The principle has been sacrificed at the altar of the free market.

What, then, are the chances of a shorthold revival for the private rental sector? Pretty slim, if the types of landlord currently operating on the market are anything to go by. Small landlords, those letting more than just the odd house or flat, whether organised for tax purposes as private property companies, partnerships, private trusts, or simply as individuals, have little to gain by staying in the rented housing market. With the High Street institutions — the banks and the building societies — currently yielding financial returns far in excess of freely agreed rents, few small landlords are likely to remain in the market. Once their properties fall vacant, sale and reinvestment with the institutions is the likely outcome. Faced with the time consuming and, perhaps, troublesome nature of letting residential property, in a period of escalating costs, the attraction of an alternative trouble-free investment is likely to prove too strong.

At the other end of the rental market, the practices of disinvestment by the large institutional landlords — the public property companies, the insurance companies and the pension trust funds — are now well advanced. Investment in rented housing is of little importance to these institutions. They can realise a higher return on their capital in the equity or commercial property markets. Even where yields have been decreasing, for example from investment in shops, there is little likelihood of them reconsidering investment in the rented housing market. There is a non-financial deterrent to their investment in this area: a rented house is someone's home — it carries with it the risk of public and political scandal which few public companies can afford. In a straight contest, the legacy of Rachmanism is likely to outweigh the attraction of free market rents and steer the institutions away from the rented housing market.

Not all landlords, however, are leaving the market. The rise of owner-occupation in the postwar period has been accompanied by an increase in the number of resident landlords, many of whom *have* to let rooms simply to meet their mortgage repayments. But they too are unlikely to be attracted by shortholds. First, because their tenants already have less rights than those of non-resident landlords and, therefore, they have less to gain from the decreased security of tenure provisions granted by shortholds. Secondly, and more importantly, they tend to operate outside the political controls of the market anyway. Letting a room for resident landlords is rarely a full-blooded commercial transaction; they *lend* it to the tenant in return for a privately agreed sum and keep a close, personal watch over it. This close relationship of control between resident landlord and tenant can successfully frustrate virtually any legislative rights granted to tenants. In a situation of scarcity, this relationship is necessarily an unequal one. As a consequence, shortholds have nothing to offer resident landlords.

They also have little to add to the interests of those landlords who are currently the most active in the market — those letting property on licences, or through flatsharing agreements or holiday lets, to undermine the intentions of the Rent Acts. Why use shortholds, when tenants' rights can be whittled even further away by the use of existing legal devices?

Obviously, not all landlords fall into the types of agents described; the rented housing market is far more complex than sketched here. But the practices of resident and non-resident landlords outlined above account for a high proportion of agents in the market. Shortholds, therefore, are unlikely to gain a significant foothold among such agents, and where they are taken up, they are likely to increase the exploitation of tenants, without producing a better housing stock.

The private rented housing sector may not be dead yet, but the protracted nature of the landlord's farewell can only help unscrupulous landlords' at the expense of tenants' rights, and do little to provide rented hous-

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ing at prices people can afford. Landlordism, even in its acceptable face, cannot meet housing needs, but it is unlikely the present Government will recognise that fact.

THE POLISH ECONOMIC CRISIS

Poland is currently experiencing an economic crisis comparable in magnitude to the Great Depression (1929-32) in the West or the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward (1959-61) in China. Real wages fell in 1978 and have fallen further in each successive year. The national income fell by about 3% in 1979, about 4% in 1980, and a further fall of about 15% is expected this year. It seems quite possible that the decline will continue next year. Official figures published in September, which are unlikely to have erred on the pessimistic side, assumed that the 1982 fall would be in the range 1% to 16%, most probably 4%.[1]

A grave problem is that of internal market disequilibrium. At the prevailing prices, which it is difficult to raise enough because of opposition from the workers, demand greatly exceeds supply for most goods. This has necessitated the introduction this year of rationing for a wide range of goods and also massive price increases. Nevertheless, shortages and queues have remained widespread and shopping a terrible burden for millions of women. It is no wonder that on the black market the zloty has reached new lows against the dollar, that the chances of a monetary reform are high and that the marketing of agricultural products has been completely disorganised.

Another major problem is that of external disequilibrium. The current account of the balance of payments with the capitalist countries has been in deficit every year since 1972. Hence Poland has accumulated massive hard currency debts, estimated earlier this year at around $24 milliard. Last year, Poland's debt service ratio (ie the ratio of its hard currency interest payments and capital repayments to its hard currency income) was 83%. This means that nearly all its hard currency income from exports was needed to meet the bills for expenditures already made, and almost nothing was available to pay for urgently needed imports of agicultural and industrial goods. As a result, this year Poland was forced to request the rescheduling of its debts, both to Western governments and banks. This not only reduced Poland's creditworthiness, but also that of its CMEA partners, such as Romania and the GDR. Because of the shortage of hard currency, poor creditworthiness and declining domestic output, trade with the West showed a sharp decline this year. This had a serious adverse effect on output, since much of Polish industry depends on imports, for example essential components, from the West.

The three key bottlenecks at the present time are coal, foreign exchange and marketed agricultural output. Coal output in 1980 was 193 million tons. This year it is expected to be 164 million tons, a decline of 15%. For the next year the September estimate was for somewhere in the range 155 to 175 million tons. The decline in coal output adversely affects export earnings, industrial production, and heating levels this winter. The authorities have announced a number of measures to stimulate coal output. High bonuses have been offered to miners working on Saturdays. Financial incentives have been offered to delay retirement. Part of a conscript's military service can now be replaced by work as a miner. The authorities are recruiting 10,000 new miners this year and plan to recruit another 10,000 next year.

The efforts of the authorities to step up coal output have so far been ineffective. The miners who are organised in Solidarity regard the 40 hour week as a great achievement and are opposed to the use of massive material incentives to encourage Saturday working. (Solidarity has offered to encourage the miners to work eight Saturdays this year without bonuses but only on the condition that the allocation of the extra coal is in the hands of Solidarity.) Furthermore, under conditions of extreme shortages of goods, the effectiveness of money incentives is enormously undermined.

The shortage of foreign exchange means that desirable agricultural and industrial imports cannot be afforded and that exports are essential even of goods acutely needed at home. The shortage of industrial imports reduces industrial output sharply. Many of the investment projects built with the assistance of Western firms and financed by Western credits, the repayment of which is now such a burden, cannot be operated at anything like their intended capacity because of the shortage of essential Western components. Neither this year nor next year is the country likely to have a current account surplus with capitalist countries sufficient even to meet the interest on its debts. Hence further loans, to meet the interest on the old loans, will probably be necessary.

Per capita food output fell in 1979 by about 1% and in 1980 by about 11%. This year state purchases of livestock products are expected to fall further (by more than 20% for meat and about 6% for milk). Given the big wage increases which have taken place over the last year and a half, a desperate meat shortage is inevitable this winter, with obvious social implications. An important role for Solidarity in recent months has been to contain spontaneous strikes and demonstrations by women workers demanding food for their children.

In the crisis both the West and the CMEA countries are providing Poland with economic assistance. The West has rescheduled debts falling due this year. It has also provided some food. The CMEA countries allowed Poland to run significant trade deficits last year and this year and are expected to permit this also next year. (This means that when Poland eventually recovers, it will have to repay debts not only to the West but also to its CMEA partners.)

The present crisis makes very obvious two important differences between economic crises under capitalism and under state socialism. These concern employment and the effects of increasing demand. In a capitalist economy which had experienced the fall in output which Poland has experienced, there would be massive and rapidly growing unemployment. In Poland, however, full employment has been retained. This means that large numbers of people are maintained in employment who are not actually required for the current level of output. This reflects the Polish Communist Party's commitment to full employment. Since they are being paid but are not producing consumer goods, the most obvious effect of the crisis is to be seen not in the labour market but in the consumer goods market. In addition, since a capitalist economy is normally demand constrained, there exists a mechanism under capitalism which ensures that an initial increase in demand (eg, an increase in net export demand) leads to a bigger final increase in demand and output. On the other hand, since a state socialist economy is normally supply constrained, an increase in demand (eg, an increase in money wages) produces no extra output whatsoever (in fact by disorganising the economy it may even reduce output) but simply worsens shortages. There does, however, in a supply constrained economy exist an analogous mechanism, 'the bottleneck multiplier'. This term describes the process by which a shortage of one product (eg, coal) causes the shortage of other products (eg, electricity), which causes the shortage of other products (eg, steel), which causes shortages of numerous manufactured goods, which causes shortages..... In this way an initial shortage can spread right through the economy steadily increasing disruption. Contemporary Poland is a good example of this process at work.

There are two further differences between the crisis under capitalism and under state socialism. These concern the adjustment

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mechanism and the allocation of blame. A market economy has built in negative feedback mechanisms that normally ensure that a recession is self-correcting. In the recession money wages are depressed by unemployment, interest rates fall, and commodity prices are depressed by lack of demand. Low interest rates, low commodity prices, the availability of cheap labour and innovation, create the possibility of profitable investment. Under state socialism there are no such inbuilt negative feedback mechanisms. On the contrary, the state's full employment policy automatically means that a decline in the output of consumer goods simply worsens shortages which in turn reduces output further by discouraging workers from working and farmers from selling their output to the state. Under state socialism the crisis can only be resolved by successful state action. The state, however, has little experience of the appropriate kind of policies and many necessary measures (such as price increases) are being actively opposed by the workers. The position of the latter has been strengthened by the crisis whereas under capitalism it would have been weakened.

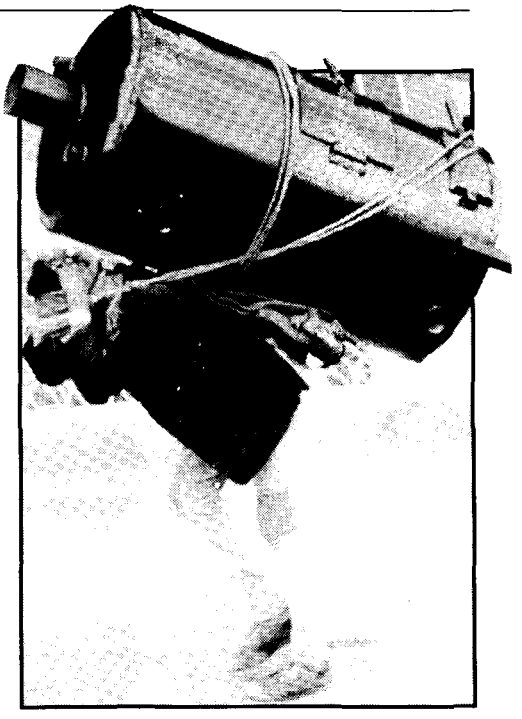
In a market economy it is always possible to allocate the blame for the crisis to impersonal economic forces. No one caused the recession by conscious policy. It appears to most people plausible to ascribe the blame to impersonal forces such as the world recession. In a state socialist economy, however, it is the state which runs the economy and therefore the leaders of the state who must take the blame for the crisis. Hence, whereas the crisis in the West has tended to strengthen conservative forces, in the state socialist countries it has undermined the legitimacy of the regimes and created a political crisis in addition to the economic crisis.

CANCÚN — THIRD WORLD LAST?

The 22 heads of state/government who met to discuss North-South issues in Mexico in October don't seem to have got as far as agreeing an agenda. Since very little preparatory work was done for the 'summit', no meeting of minds about global North-South issues was expected. The net result of the summit was that there may be further talks about talks at the UN in 1982. Ronald Reagan preached the virtues of the 'magic of markets'. He and Haig monopolised media attention by nearly continuous press conferences, so that very little that Third World leaders said was reported. Which perhaps is just as well. What was reported was pretty dire. Venezuela suggested that the San Jose agreement whereby it and Mexico supply oil to Central American governments should be extended to the impoverished North Americans. Haig got into contradiction with Cheysson, Mitterrand's foreign secretary, over El Salvador. None of the major Brandt report figures made the conference, and nor did Austrian chancellor Kreisky who with Mexican president Lopez Portillo instigated the whole farce. Kreisky was ill. Cuba, which is chairing the Non-Aligned nations this year, was not invited. Lopez Portillo met Fidel Castro to explain and agree a joint statement whereby Castro did not insist on attending. Cuba's presence 'would mean the cancellation of the meeting, given the well-known position of the United States', they said.

Why are North-South talks necessary anyway? What's wrong with the United Nations as a North-South forum? Well, once West European governments began to 'grant independence' to former colonies in large numbers, the 'democratic' structure of the UN (one nation, one vote) produced increasing pressure for changes in the world economy. The UN Conference on Trade and Development was set up in 1964 and a UN Centre on Transnational Corporations in 1975 following Salvador Allende's 1972 General Assembly attack on transnationals in Chile, particularly the ITT/CIA connection. The UN Security Council, with permanent memberships for the major powers, is less troublesome than the General Assembly, but could hardly deal with the global economic issues between the trilateral nations of North America, West Europe and Japan and their economic dependencies in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Some forum was required which major capitalist powers would take seriously, since they were unwilling to take seriously UN agencies under non-aligned pressure.

North-South discussions began when OPEC used the oil weapon before hopes/fears (depending on whether the viewer was South/North) of general Third-World economic warfare against the advanced capitalist heartlands disintegrated on the rocks of sluggish global capitalism. Part of the discussion was about re-cycling revenue from the quadrupling of oil prices through the poorest nations, which were badly hit by the oil price rises. Part of it was ensuring restabilisation of the Third World after the surge of popularity of liberation movements during the Vietnam war. The idea of global North-South talks in which continuation of capitalist access to Third World countries as suppliers of food and materials, as markets, as investment outlets was offered by the Third World in return for an improved deal for the



Third World within the Western economy (codes of conduct for multinationals, improved commodity agreements, reduced tariffs, etc) may not have done much for the world's poor. But it did clean up the image of the transnationals and Western governments. It worked in much the same way as the Carter administration's supposed commitment to 'human rights', which also helped to re-legitimise the tarnished image of US global policy. North-South talks produced limited reforms, and recognised the growing power of newly-industrialising Third World centres like Brazil, strengthening the existing North-South power structure by removing its worst excesses. Like 'human-rights', Reagan may find 'North-South' talk a cheap way to put a tolerable face upon an intolerable policy. Nonetheless our own foreign secretary lord Carrington, warned before Cancun that 'expectations of a blueprint for the future may rise too much merely by the fact that the summit is to be held'.

The economic summit which preceded Cancun in August in Canada produced some optimism about Cancun. But given the commitment of most of the governments at that summit to some form of monetarism, and the commitment of the Reagan administration to trade not aid for the Third World (and to direct aid not multilateral aid), the *sine qua non* of increased Third World bargaining power, namely expansion of world trade, was simply not on the agenda of either the economic summit or the North-South summit.

Contributors: **Sally Davison, John Allen, Michael Ellman and Batara Simatupang, Peter Thompson.**

[1] *Zycie Gospodarcze* 1981, no 38 p5

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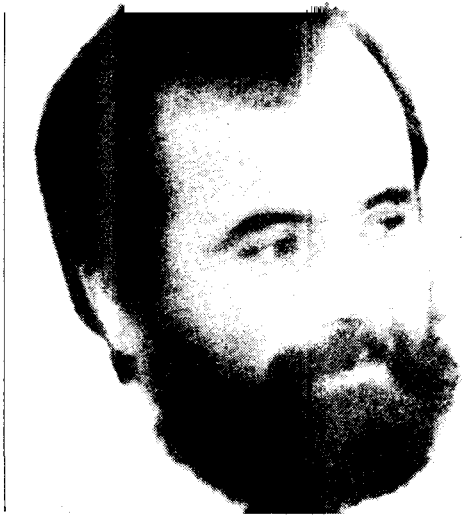
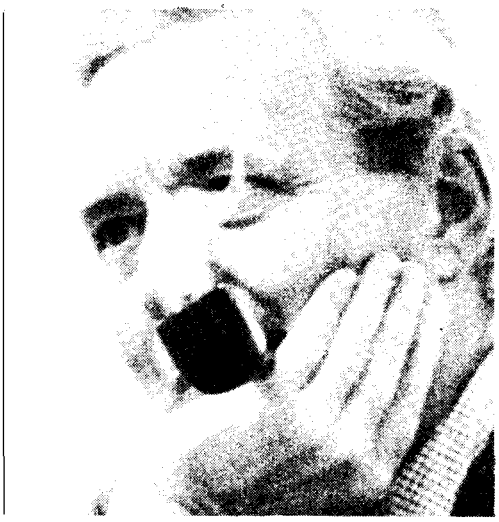
Pete Carter was the West Midlands co-ordinator for the Peoples March for jobs. He is Midlands Regional Organiser of UCATT and a member of the Communist Party National Executive Committee.



Jack Dromey was the South East co-ordinator for the Peoples March for Jobs. He is a district officer of the TGWU and secretary of the South East Region TUC.



Tony Benn is a Labour MP and member of the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

The Peoples March for Jobs was an extraordinary success. Like never before since the war, the labour movement acted as a magnet to the nation. Here **Tony Benn, Pete Carter** and **Jack Dromey** discuss what lessons the labour movement should draw from it.

A Roundtable Discussion

Coming in from the Cold

Tony Benn If we're going to discuss the People's March can I begin by suggesting we talk about how it began.

Pete Carter The idea grew based on the reality of rising unemployment, policies that were obviously not going to reverse that trend and, above all, in our view a labour movement that had been unable to deal in an effective way with this through traditional forms of struggle. Therefore there was discussion on how we could focus on unemployment and win the 62% of the population who at that time saw unemployment as the main issue facing Britain. The discussion took place in the North West, which was very affected by unemployment, and the aim was to have an initiative — the People's March — that would be bold and imaginative. In particular, we wanted to appeal beyond the trade union movement for support.

Jack Dromey The discussions about the launch of the March went on through December and January between the three TUC regional councils, the North West, the West Midlands and the South East. It was in a situation where unemployment was an issue of growing political importance and where the trade union movement was reeling under blow after blow, with morale very low. One of the things that we wanted to do was to bring together all the different forces in society that were concerned, like we were, about unemployment and to create a great movement for change, with the trade union and labour movement as its motor, but involving a genuine dialogue with other forces in society seeking change.

TB What seems to me to have happened in 1981 is that we've gone back to what the labour movement was primarily about, which was jobs. One of the great problems of the last Labour government, for example, was that anyone who supported jobs, as I tried to do at Meriden or wherever it was, was always denounced as supporting some non-viable project. Or if you raised it as a general question, MPs, for example, would say 'how many letters have you had about unemployment?'

And this is where the Peoples March played a very significant part in that it once again captured and articulated the deep feeling people had, not just in the trade unions, but as you say, in the churches, the community groups, among women, among blacks, among young people, among old or unskilled workers and put it on the agenda. The origins of this recovery of the priority of full employment are perhaps worth tracing. I don't know whether you could relate it to those struggles that came up — UCS River Don, Meriden and the *Scottish Daily News* — where the fight for jobs was fought on a single issue basis and didn't get an awful lot of support. Could you give some examples which would allow us to see the People's March in its proper historical perspective? What was the battle over unemployment like before the big campaigns began in 1980 and 1981?

Colin Barnett, the North-West co-ordinator of the Peoples March for Jobs and secretary of the North West Region of the TUC, which initiated the March, was unable to attend the discussion as planned because of an accident.

The discussion was sponsored by **UCATT** and held at the UCATT national headquarters on 15 October. *Les Wood, general secretary of UCATT, writes:* 'we welcome this opportunity to sponsor a deeper discussion on the lessons of the Peoples March for Jobs'.

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JD Part of the problem was that those struggles were, by and large, confined within the four walls of the factory. There were of course exceptions. The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders fight, in which you were deeply involved, was the notable exception. A tremendous effort was made to mobilise the community and perhaps it's significant that one of the few successful struggles was one that reached out and won tremendous support outside the factory gate. Many of the struggles of the seventies underline the phrase that you've often used, that non-political trade unionism is a blind alley. You cannot do much in the way of combatting unemployment with your organised strength in the workplace alone. You also need the support of the community and a wider political perspective.

PC The whole concept, from the beginning, was to get people involved in struggle. In the absence of that struggle, people can never make the leap from their current day to day existence and identify with factory occupations like Lee Jeans.

I have been thinking a lot about this over the recent years. I always used to go around the sites saying a 'victory for us lads on this site is a victory for lads on another site'. But whilst that might have been the case, it certainly isn't the case now. Since the victory at Lee Jeans, for example, there have been more closures and redundancies, and it hasn't had any noticeable effect on the fight for jobs. If we, as some on the Left do, see the major fight for jobs in terms of the occupation of plants, then I don't think that's going to advance the struggle. The struggle must be taken out into the wider community — that was the objective of the Peoples March. And when you begin to win much broader support, then that should begin to help the Lee Jeans, it should begin to help the occupations. We have to have that interrelationship. The occupation of Lee Jeans is a million miles away for many people, and if they win or lose doesn't really penetrate their consciousness. But the Peoples March was different because it was so broad, it afforded the opportunity for people to identify with unemployment. We have to learn how to win this middle ground by our language, by our interpretation of policies and by our imaginative initiatives. But we tend to have a narrow appeal and we don't move the body of opinion that we could and should.

TB It is worth analysing what is meant by non-political because you talked about non-political in terms of non-political trade unionism and you talked about the Peoples March as a non-political march now...

PC Non-party political.

TB I think this is worth analysing because non-political trade unionism which limits itself to wage militancy, which restricts itself to the confines of the factory and says we don't want to have anything whatever to do with the government or the Labour Party or socialists, is a dead end. That type of non-political unionism is really moving towards the American unions. On the other hand when you say that you've broadened this out beyond just a sectarian appeal you are talking about another type of non-political where you're not selling a bill of goods but you're actually stretching out into the community, into the political arena, and even going to other organisations like the church. Am I right in saying that the success of this was because we redefined non-political in a new way?

Now on the churches, I am particularly interested in this. If you look back at the history of the labour movement over the centuries, for many people the vehicle of political struggle was religion. I would like to ask how you made that approach to the church?

PC Even before the Peoples March, we were very conscious about the church doing work on the issue of unemployment. It was a difficult problem for both Jack and me, though not so much for Colin Barnett, because he's a churchman, so he was much more at home. But for us it was breaking new ground.

In the final analysis we found a tremendous amount of goodwill. We both say the March could never have been without the church's practical assistance. But what impressed me most in the West Midlands was the political contribution that the bishops made, whether it be Shrewsbury, Stafford, Wolverhampton, Litchfield, or Coventry. The contribution they made to the March was better, I think, than that of a lot of the Left politicians who addressed the rallies in the various towns. Because they were tuned in to what the Peoples March was all about. They brought to the March an expansive contribution that had us all thinking. For instance the church now says quite clearly, and it's right from the top, that there can be no such thing as full employment ever again in this country. Now we would argue that is wrong, but it's very significant. That's why we didn't want, as a movement, to come forward with an alternative strategy for the March. We wanted the March to be a vehicle for the intercourse, the exchange of ideas, because we haven't necessarily got the alternative. There are a lot of people in this world outside the trade unions, outside the Labour Party, who have got ideas and solutions. The idea of the March was to try to tie this together so that the March itself would bring forward some alternative based on a People's Alternative, and the church within that played an important part.

JD We found in the South East a ready reception amongst local church people. Industrial chaplins were particularly helpful, probably because they are confronted directly with the problems of unemployment, but also local vicars, priests and their congregations. And it wasn't a question of christian charity for hunger marchers through their area as it was in the thirties. It was much more than that. There was a real yearning for dialogue.

PC You made a point earlier, Tony, about whether, in all this, we are trying to do away with the traditional forms of struggle in favour of some new method? We're certainly not throwing out the baby with the bath water. To us the occupation of factories is important, to us the fight for wages is important and nobody would have been more pleased if the British Leyland workers had been prepared to conduct a struggle for pay. This is very important for my own union. Daily we're taking on fights with employers, picketing the sites and so on. Now that is a very important weapon that we must encourage, that we must use and which we must never give up. That is vital, you could call that our tradition. But we have to find ways of linking that tradition with the new, and the idea of the Peoples March was to do that...

TB I didn't mean to suggest that wage militancy wasn't an important element and I share your view entirely about the British Leyland struggle. But the fact is that in a slump wage militancy is less likely to succeed because people are so frightened. But can I broaden it from the churches? You see what you've conveyed is exactly the impression I got when I met the March. It wasn't simply a moving microphone coming through the country, it was a moving dialogue, a rolling dialogue, and as it rolled it became a way of impacting upon the whole consciousness of the nation. Now you mention the churches, but of course there were a lot of others. There were lots of blacks, there were the women, there were the people who felt that capitalism not only destroyed people but also destroyed communities. The March was almost a daily newspaper rolling through the country to which people were allowed to contribute their opinion

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and therefore it broadened and broadened and broadened and made a very profound impact as it went through. It gave hope. It became a vehicle for a very wide range of aspirations about how society should be run. Could you give me an idea of the other inputs into the March, I think that would help us understand why it succeeded?

PC One of the biggest contributions made was through the involvement of the local councils. By and large these were Labour controlled. This was a new dimension to me, discussing with Labour councils the input they could make. In hindsight I often look back now at those heady moments and think why the hell the trade union movement hasn't developed a working relationship with these local bodies. All too often in fact, we're in absolute conflict with them. But we learnt some important lessons — the great power of local authorities; the influence the trade union movement gets, for instance, from a Lord Mayor actually identifying with the March and helping to put the marchers up; the Lord Mayor's appeals from which we got funds to feed and to accommodate. It really put us in a new ball game.

We had enormous problems bringing it all together — not just the church, the women, the communities, but also the local councils. It was an art really. It would have been much easier to go and organise a demonstration saying get the Tories ut. That's so easy compared to the building in practice, of, well, a democratic alliance — that's what we're saying. A democratic alliance of people, of which the local council is very much a part. But the whole relationship has brought us a new and very powerful dimension of struggle.

JD I'll just add one point to what Peter said. In relation to the local councils there is a profound debate going on within the labour movement about the role of Labour councillors. I think we're beginning now at last to move away from the idea that Labour councillors should be elected managers towards the idea that Labour councillors should have a leading campaign function within the community. It was very encouraging to see the councils prepared to come out and identify themselves in a campaigning way on the issue of unemployment in their community.

TB I want to pursue this because it seems to me that this is, indeed, what is happening. And with the Heseltine legislation, which takes away the power of local authorities to raise and spend money, the capacity of Labour councillors to be managers is undermined. They are becoming shop stewards who you look to to represent you, and not just to manage you. Therefore there is a natural alliance between the labour movement, the trades councils, the shop stewards movement and the local councillors because they are all fighting not only the Tory government but also an economic system which will crush local government as part of the attack on public expenditure. So if we're going to draw lessons, one that really is important is how we try and revitalise local government which, in some cases, particularly where there have been Labour councils in power for years and years, have become shrunken arms of government that have lost their links with the people.

JD One of the bitter ironies about the traditional relationship between the trade union movement and Labour local authorities is that, with a few exceptions, you only talk to a Labour local authority through the collective bargaining process. But that's now beginning to change. The Peoples March helped but there is also a tremendous amount of work being done on the alternative economic strategy at local level.

PC The experience of the Peoples March really brought home to me how very easy it is to get cut off in our society, even when you have the best of intentions. In the West Midlands, for instance, we've got Labour councils and county councils that currently are doing all sorts of things for the unemployed such as free bus fares and free admission to municipal buildings. But they are coming under incredible stick from the ratepayers and bus users. There's always a danger in Labour councils that they operate from a 'commandism'. They take the decision, it's a principled decision and we're going to carry out our manifesto. And a lot of them fail to take the people along with them. And if they do that they get chopped very easily. So in the West Midlands, our UCATT region has, based on the experience of the March, set up a meeting with the West Midlands County Council. We are inviting officers from all the trade unions so that the county councillors can put their policies and outline their objectives and we as trade unions can consider how to popularise, win support for and counteract the campaign against their programme.

TB I agree entirely with that. Now can we move to women, because I don't want it to come up as a side issue where we all say 'of course we had a lot of support from the women'. I would like to think that we can discuss this not only in terms of how you got women to support you, which is a crude way of looking at it, but how far the Peoples March became, or this whole movement can become, a vehicle by which the women's input into the political scene can be strengthened. And we must bear in mind that most trade union conferences, most TUC Congresses or Labour Party Conferences for that matter, are largely composed of middle aged men. That indeed is one of the greatest weaknesses of the labour movement: we've been quite incapable of stretching out and absorbing what women are saying. More than that, in its structures men organise in a highly hierarchical way where its rank and order of importance that matters, whereas the whole women's contribution to political organisations seems to me to be much more informal, much more effective and very often gets results much more quickly. Now can I draw you out on that?

JD We have a very strong women's lobby in the South East TUC and we welcome that very much. We decided not to make some special separate provision but to build into all our organisation for the March the women's dimension on unemployment. So in the material we produced, the meetings beforehand, the rallies during the March and particularly on the last Sunday, we put great emphasis on the particular impact of unemployment on women. Women's organisations were involved from early on and played a very important role in a number of the local organising committees along the route, not making tea and sandwiches, but up front with propaganda and organisation for the March. Some of the alliances were difficult ones because, as with the churches, we weren't simply in the business of talking to the women who were converted. We also wanted to develop a dialogue with women who were not converted, many of whom were critical, indeed cynical, about the trade union movement. Nonetheless, despite all this women were still under-represented on the March.

TB We haven't got any round the table.

JD That's right, none of the three co-ordinators of the March were women. Incidentally, we found very often that a lot of unemployed women with children, who were very keen to go on the March, had tremendous difficulty getting away because of their domestic circumstances. And too often women with good trade union husbands, who ought to have been prepared to take on domestic responsi-

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bilities, to let their wives go on the March, were not prepared to do so. But, because of our efforts, I think the women's movement began to see us in a new light.

PC There's a tremendous problem of sexism in the labour movement, especially in the trade union movement. A very deep problem, and I think it's as deep as racism when you start to challenge it. Male domination in the movement was absolutely clear in the fight for the March, although as Jack said, big efforts were made to deal with it. But our efforts were sometimes rather paternalistic, pandering if you like, to the question of women's demands and women's rights to be heard, with no real attempt by the trade union movement to tackle the question of sexism. Now, as a result, we only got 50 women on the March. There was not a single woman on the National Co-ordinating Committee, although one or two did turn up now and again. Now of course when you've got a committee like that, deciding on what it's going to do for women or how it's going to involve women, the thing is off to a bad start. Obviously at all planning levels we must involve women. Both in London and in our region we did make special efforts to do this, especially with particular events. In the West Midlands they held a women's event which was very successful. I support the right of women to organise themselves and find the best possible way of identifying with the movement, I think that's essential.

TB Now let's move to the ethnic communities as a special case, because they've been very badly hit by unemployment, particularly young blacks. What connection were you able to make in the Peoples March with the ethnic communities?

JD This is another area where the trade union movement has much to learn in terms of developing a dialogue. In the past, there has tended to be a cynical relationship where very often Labour Party politicians have regarded blacks simply as voting fodder. There is now an increasing reaction against this within the black community, which rightly demands that the trade union movement should express its demands and respond to its problems, in the workplace and in the community. From the start we sought to involve people, particularly from the West Indian and Asian communities, in our organisation. The two best examples in our region were Southall and the carnival in London's Brockwell Park. As the 500 marchers came into Southall they were greeted by thousands from the Asian community, the majority of whom were women. There were banners strewn across the road, in English and in Punjabi, 'Southall Welcomes the Peoples March'. And the marchers were accommodated overnight in the Sikh temples.

Then, on the penultimate day, there was the carnival in Brockwell Park in Brixton, attended by 70,000 people, only a few weeks after the Brixton events but without a single arrest. The reason why it was such a success was that the local black communities were involved. One of the things we did in advance was to negotiate with the police that they should keep the hell out of Brockwell Park and let the stewards from the trade union movement and the black community look after the situation. That's what happened and it was a tremendous success.

PC I'd just like to start from the bitter experience that the trade union movement only pays lip service to the fight on racism. It can pass all the resolutions, and good resolutions at that, but in my experience this issue is a hot potato and we do not face up to our responsibility in fighting it through. I don't think the trade union movement can easily appeal to the blacks because the blacks, especially the younger ones, have really no respect for it because it's seen as doing nothing for them. Indeed, in many cases, trade union members have been condemning black people for the problem: it's something we have to recognise. So, on the Peoples March, we tried to approach it in a broader way. And we were able to get young blacks and older blacks involved, including in the organisation and on the platforms.

TB There are certain other groups I would just like to touch on. The old for example. I think one of the most extraordinary things, that's happened as a result of the March and other developments, is the number of older people who were brought to socialism before the First World War and in the twenties and thirties, who are recognisng in what is being said something they haven't heard since 1945. Then there is the connection with the peace movement. One of the reasons why people are deprived is because money is being spent on weapons, and the peace movement is a response to this. Even the disabled were involved. All the people who are discriminated against by society seem to have found in the March a vehicle for their aspirations and drew understanding and encouragement from it.

JD Two of the marchers were sponsored by other disabled people to participate. One guy was blind with a guide dog. Incidentally it just shows how the best laid plans can be found wanting. On the very first day of the March, when we got to Halewood, everyone was tucking into a meal and this poor dog looked a bit funny: we realised we'd forgotten the dog food, so we had to send someone out to get some. Another incident. Three weeks before the March arrived in Luton, we had this huge rally of pensioners there. People recalled Jarrow and the other marches, and ruefully commented that we're having to do it all over again. They said they would be there when the March arrived. They were indeed. There was a little column of pensioners waiting for two hours in the pouring rain for the March to get into Luton so they could join in.

PC You're absolutely right, Tony, because there was somebody on that March that everybody could identify with.

TB That's right, that's the point I want to make.

PC Whether it was a glue sniffer, and we had glue sniffers, punks, people who had suffered —epileptics, the disabled — traditional trade unionists, the middle class unemployed teacher. In other words the March, the 500, was a reflection of the whole breadth of

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our society. There was something magic about that March. It mobilised people in a way nothing quite has mobilised people since the war. And I think that was its success, because we said from the beginning that it was going to be a Peoples March. There were of course a lot of problems: it would have been much easier for us to have just had trade unionists, for the discipline alone. But in the event the very combination of all those people was in itself a self discipline. People came to appreciate each other's problems and each other.

JD A reflection of the sincerity of the March was the outstanding series of articles by Louis Heren in *The Times*. I didn't agree with every single thing said in the articles, but the interviews with the various marchers reflected to a very large extent the composition of the March.

TB Let me come to Louis Heren because I was going to raise a question about that. You see the conclusion I think we are agreed about is that it wasn't just a march, it was the people's voice for a different society. But how was it treated by the people who would really have to change if these aspirations were to be met? Now Heren struck me as a man who was trying to disconnect it from political action, he was trying to speak about them as if they were only individuals. I may be wrong, I didn't read all of his articles, but I noticed, for example, that his coverage of Liverpool made it seem as if it was really quite separate from the normal life of the community. I felt that he was really trying to warn the establishment that if they didn't take them seriously they were in for trouble.

Now at a certain stage it has to get harder — or clearer — in its message. If any of the aspirations reflected in the March are to be realised, there has to be a fundamental change. The danger of looking back with euphoria on a remarkable event is that, if it fails to have a follow up, then it will remain just a remarkable festival, like the Notting Hill Festival, which everybody likes but is a bit uneasy about. How does it sharpen, how does it clarify, how do we establish in a non-sectarian way that we are talking about equality, democracy and socialism in a society that is hierarchical, centralised, secretive, unjust, unequal, drifting to war, with no apparent prospect whatever of its problems being solved? Because, to be quite candid, and I am not saying this as a criticism of the March, the situation is worse now that it was in May, and it will be worse next May than it was last May. This is where the mobilisation, of which we are speaking, has got to be converted into some form of political alternative. How do you convert the March into what it really was, putting new, or rather old, values back on the agenda, finding new structures that are broader than sectarianism, converting people's awareness and excitement from a festival recollection into an agenda for the future. This seems to me to be the final point of our discussion, otherwise we'd go away saying what a wonderful do it was and...

PC I don't see the role of the Peoples March as arguing for a socialist Britain. I mean that's up to you and it's up to the various parties that are around, to compete for the ideas, to compete for policy. The concept of the Peoples March is to involve them in struggle, and during the course of that struggle their minds become very fertile to the need for an alternative. Now if we adopt from the outset the question of an alternative for the Peoples March we shall never get them involved in struggle, in the breadth that we were able to achieve in the Peoples March.

Now you raised this question of the peace movement, and obviously there is a link between the fight for jobs and the peace movement. But we never took that on board because the reality is, at this particular stage, that a lot of people who were supporting the Peoples March were not unilateralists. A lot of those people felt that Britain needs a bomb to defend themselves against the Russians. Therefore, if we had started at the very beginning on a unilaterial position, linking peace with the fight for jobs, there are a lot of people who would not have been involved, and who as a result of being involved in that struggle, have perhaps now learnt about the relationship between jobs and the bomb.

Now the big problem we face, and this is a big danger, is that we narrow down the appeal of that March. Some of the arguments we had to fight in the early stages of the March were for instance: we want a class march not a peoples march; we want a socialist alternative programme as the Peoples March alternative instead of simply the demand for full employment; when Bobby Sands died there was a move to get all the marchers to wear black armbands; there was continuous harrassment against the church by certain sections of the March. There was a leftist tendency that tried to impose a level of struggle on that March that the March wasn't set up to accept. The big danger was that if that tendency had won the battle of ideas, and we had worn black armbands and called for a socialist programme, then we wouldn't have seen, at the end, the sort of results we had in Trafalgar Square, and the new developments and bases of unity that were built up as a consequence...

TB Can I stop you there because I am not sure I fully understand. I accept entirely that it was not a march to indoctrinate. It didn't start with an idea that was imposed on all the groups, it was an experience. But out of an experience must come a new perception. It is no good saying, it seems to me, 'this was just an experience' which leaves it open to be picked up by the National Front, or the monetarists, or the SDP. Out of the experience of an unjust Britain — which is what it was about —there must be some received conclusion that you've got to build a society in the interests of its people. And I think that is what socialism is about. Socialism is about constructing a society around the needs of its people for jobs, for homes, for health, for schools, for dignity in retirement, for peace. Now how do you, without going back to an indoctrinating approach, which I am sure would be absolutely wrong, follow up the experience with some perception of what the choices are, and then steer the people who have had that experience, and whole community who shared in it, towards a different perception of how society may be structured? I don't call that sectarian. I call that learning through struggle, which is the basic way to learn about socialism. Now have I misunderstood you, or are you saying that I am trying to drive you back into a sectarian box?

JD There is a danger of that, you've got to be very careful. Now the March was political. It said unemployment is man-made, that what man creates men and women can change. The March's message was one of confidence not despair, there is an alternative and ordinary people of all beliefs can by their own actions change the

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world in which they live. There is nothing natural or inevitable about unemployment. That's a very broad statement but it contains within it the very basis, the heart of our alternative, one which rejects the pessimism and despair of Toryism and says there is an alternative and that you can by your own actions achieve that alternative. What the March did therefore was to make unemployment the burning issue in Britain. And we would argue that the political impact of the March has been no less than this — it cracked the base and morale of the Tories. Of course, other factors played an important role. But if we look at what has happened in the months since the Peoples March, it is evident that the very act of putting together that enormous alliance of forces which was deeply concerned about unemployment and wanted a return to full employment, had a profound impact on the Tories, on their electoral base and on their morale.

Now we need to continue to work in a broad and imaginative way and that means seeking to reach out to other groups like we did for the Peoples March, to involve them in the struggle for change, in a genuine dialogue. It's not us carrying the gospel to other groups like the blacks, the women's movement. It's a dialogue whereby both sides learn from one another. We are never going to build socialism in Britain unless we are able to reach out to and win those forces. We aren't going to win socialism if the next Labour government is elected on the basis of the most radical manifesto in our history, but with only 38% of the popular vote. We need to be able to win that middle ground, and Pete and I believe profoundly that the most important thing is to involve people in struggle and that they will learn from that struggle.

Now on the point you raised about lifting the political horizons, it is not a contradiction to say that on the one hand it is essential we work in a broad and imaginative way to capture the millions outside of our ranks who ought to be with us in the struggle for change, and on the other hand, saying that, within that context we argue our corner. Of course we do, of course we do. People reach their own conclusions, but it is legitimate that we express within the concepts of that broad and imaginative struggle, our views about why Labour — not only Labour but what we represent within the labour movement — is the only future for the people of this country. We mustn't counterpose the two.

TB Jack, I think we agree but I think it's important that we set down what the nature of the agreement is. It is not a sectarian indoctrination where you take people in crisis and you offer them only one solution. Nor is it simply a recruiting sergeant for a political party which, when it gets into power with its 38% of the vote on a radical manifesto drawn up by its top people, then claims to have won. It is neither of those things. It is the reintroduction into the national agenda of a whole range of human issues that have been ignored by managerial consensus politics — the right to work, the right to peace, the right to homes, to education. In doing that it appeals to a very broad group. The more I think about the defeat of the Labour government in 1979, the more I think we had abandoned the moral, intellectual and human hinterland of socialist values to the monetarists years ago. Indeed when they broke, electorally, through the frontline and captured a few seats, they over-ran whole areas of territory that we had abandoned. We had attacked the trade unions and their role, we had attacked full employment, we had allowed the public expenditure argument to disappear. What I would like us to agree on, if we really do, is that we are reoccupying, with struggle, and with argument, the intellectual territory that belongs properly to the people of Britain, namely their rights.

Now what about the follow-up? Is it more marches? What form is it to take to prevent this being just a flash in the pan in a darkening

society which could, if we don't resolve these problems, end up with fascism. Now if I put it that way round does it make any sense?

PC I agree with what you've said. You see I believe firmly in different levels of struggle. Take Spain, for instance. There were three levels of struggle that operated there: people who collected baked beans to give to the freedom fighters, others who gave their blood and political support, and eventually there were those who went and fought. They were different levels of commitment and they complemented each other. In other words, it is important to have different structures and levels of organisation through which people, through struggle, can make the leap from one level to another. Now what we haven't got effectively at the moment is the vehicle through which people can make the leap from the Peoples March for Jobs to the presentation of the alternative economic strategy, in a popular way that they can identify with as a result of their experiences in the Peoples March. Now that is a big political problem — for people like yourself, the Left, the Tribune Group, the Communist Party, or whatever it may be.

TB If you think I'm trying to take the broad river that you helped to bring together and turn it into a little electoral water wheel for the Labour Party, I'm not saying that. Though I think in the end some of that water will turn political wheels which will provide answers. Nor am I trying to suggest that the only instrument through which this movement can express itself is through the Labour Party, because when the Liberals voted for unilaterial disarmament at Llandudno, as far as I was concerned that was fine, because here you were seeing ideas that had been put on the agenda by what is broadly the Left beginning to influence everybody.

But I do think that the thing has to have fairly clear objectives. There are all the various levels of struggle — Lee Jeans, Grunwick, the community struggle, the women's struggle. But at some stage these struggles have got to begin to turn a lot of wheels in our society so that they all begin moving in a new direction. I wouldn't want us to leave this discussion without having clarified, at any rate as far as we can, where we stand on that. I am nervous of people going away and saying 'I'll never forget the Peoples March for Jobs' like 'I'll never forget the Royal Wedding.'

JD Let's look at the future. First, what does the March mean in terms of particular struggles that we're all involved in? We believe that what the March will have contributed is that when trade unionists, for example, are involved in struggles against the closure of their factory, hospital or school, they will look more towards the community. The ability of the trade union movement to move out into the community, create alliances, win support has been greatly incresed as a result of the Peoples March.

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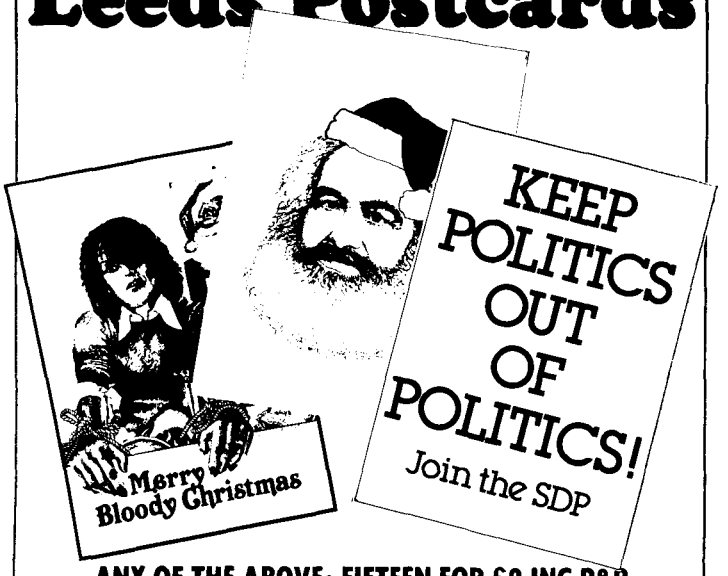

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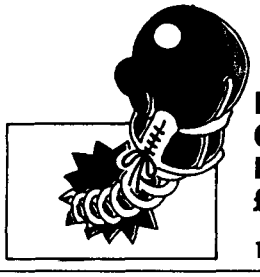

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The TUC at national level has also learnt profound lessons. They've got a long way to go, but I think that we ought to recognise that the Jobs For Youth Campaign is an important step in the right direction. The TUC now say they will work at national, regional and local level with ethnic and youth organisations in order to reach out to the young people of Britain. That's very different from saying 'here's the policy of the TUC, sign and you're one of us.'

A final point I would like to make is that I am profoundly suspicious of left sectarianism in some sections of our movement: good friends and comrades who believe that all that matters is that you get the vote within the constituency Labour party or the trade union branch and you've got socialism. I think we must realise that we've got major problems in terms of carrying our members in the trade union movement, let alone reaching out to the country as a whole. Unless we recognise the need to work in a broad and mass way to win the people of Britain for the official policies of the TUC and Labour Party — on disarmament, the alternative economic strategy, the EEC — we are in trouble. We have to find ways of involving people if we are to win mass and active support for demands of that kind. If we go back into power on the basis of us just scraping home because the SDP and the Tories have cut one another up, then I think we face possibly a disastrous situation.

Now you can get left sectarianism on the Right of the Labour Party. It is essentially that view within the labour movement that doesn't see beyond the labour movement. And that view can come from the Right or the Centre or the Left of the trade union movement. And what we argue is that we will never win change and socialism in Britain without an enormous increase in the number of people who want to see change and understand that it is ultimately Labour that is the vehicle for that change.

PC At the end of the March, Jack and myself were invited down to the House of Commons to address the Tribune Group. It was very interesting, firstly because of the diversity of opinion and secondly, and I think that we share the same view, to see the sectarian blinkered position that a lot of the Left took within that meeting. And it really epitomised for us the problem of the Left. There were two or three MPs there who were saying the next step for the Peoples March is to get into Warrington, and translate the Peoples March into Labour votes. Now we were absolutely horrified at this...

TB Is that sectarianism or is it electorialism? I mean if an MP has got a marginal seat and thinks you might have won him a few votes — is that a sectarian approach or just looking at it only in terms of electoral politics?

PC Well I think the two are related, aren't they? I mean you use a sectarian tactic for an electoral purpose, and this is in fact what was happening. There were some there that were against that, but, by and large, this tended to be the view. And we also found this in the sort of speeches that a lot of the Tribune MPs made in various parts of the country. They argued a narrow anti-Tory position and for Labour as the answer. Sometimes they even used the right-left conflict within the party on a Peoples March platform. Now this doesn't appeal to the people, it keeps us in a *cul de sac*. This sectarianism means we are not able to appeal to the middle ground, and as a result things are polarised. So I think we have a lot of thinking to do.

TB When people talk about the middle ground, they always imply that if you water down what you are saying you will appeal to the floating voter, to put it in electoral terms. For years the Labour Party was driven off socialism on the grounds that the polls suggested that the man in the middle wasn't going to be committed. Yet really what was needed was to sharpen the struggle in such a way as to appeal to the middle ground. Now that's very different from drifting back into consensus.

PC The problem, here, Tony, is the political expression of this is not going over in the popular way of the Peoples March. At the Labour Party Conference, for instance, the big issues were the Bomb and the Common Market. Now to be honest we're not speaking the people's language, we're not really as a movement relating to their problems. I can't help but think you know, that to the blokes I work with every day, the Common Market and the Bomb, are not as important as we tend to make out. They face enormous day to day problems of living, of the kid's education, of wages, of mortgages. Now our people on the Left tend not to talk in that sort of language. They talk about the big issues, rather than the small ones through which people can relate to us, and then relate to the big issues, like the Bomb and the Common Market.

TB It may be that what you really discovered was a new way of communicating with people through a Peoples March. Now I think the role of the Peoples March as a media is a very important issue to knock into place before we wind up this discussion. It was a way of communicating that was immediate, that was direct, that involved people in doing something and out of which will come a perception that must move them away from the structure of society as it now exists. Because, frankly, if you don't do that, you really have led them up the garden path like the Pied Piper and who knows where they end up. Now how the Pied Piper takes the Peoples March and moves it broadly in the direction of change that would improve their daily living conditions and their prospect of survival —that must be the question that inspires you when you discuss what to do next. Maybe next year we ought to have more Peoples Marches.

JD The possibilities for that are now greater than they were six months ago. Because the Peoples March opened up new horizons for the trade union movement in terms of how we can work and win people in a mass way. And if that's built on, then we have the real prospect of popularising those key issues that the TUC and the Labour Party have rightly identified. We aren't going to come out of the Common Market, unilaterally disarm, nor pursue the alternative economic strategy unless there is mass support for those policies. That's the great task for socialists: how do we win mass support for those progressive policies, how do we break out of our own self-imposed ghettos and reject telephone box politics.

TB I agree with that, and I think that if that is the lesson, if that's what people pick up as a result of our discussion, then it will have been very clarifying, because obviously what was begun in April/May 1981 has got to be carried forward. Otherwise the prospects for this country are much more likely to lie in the danger of a repressive society where even your Peoples March would be banned. How you use this initiative to give people hope, that is the key question for the labour movement for the rest of the 1980s.

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Mother Wales, get off me back?

Gwyn Williams

Folklore is misleading. South Wales is no longer the militant area it once was. But more than that the dominance of Labour could finally be at an end

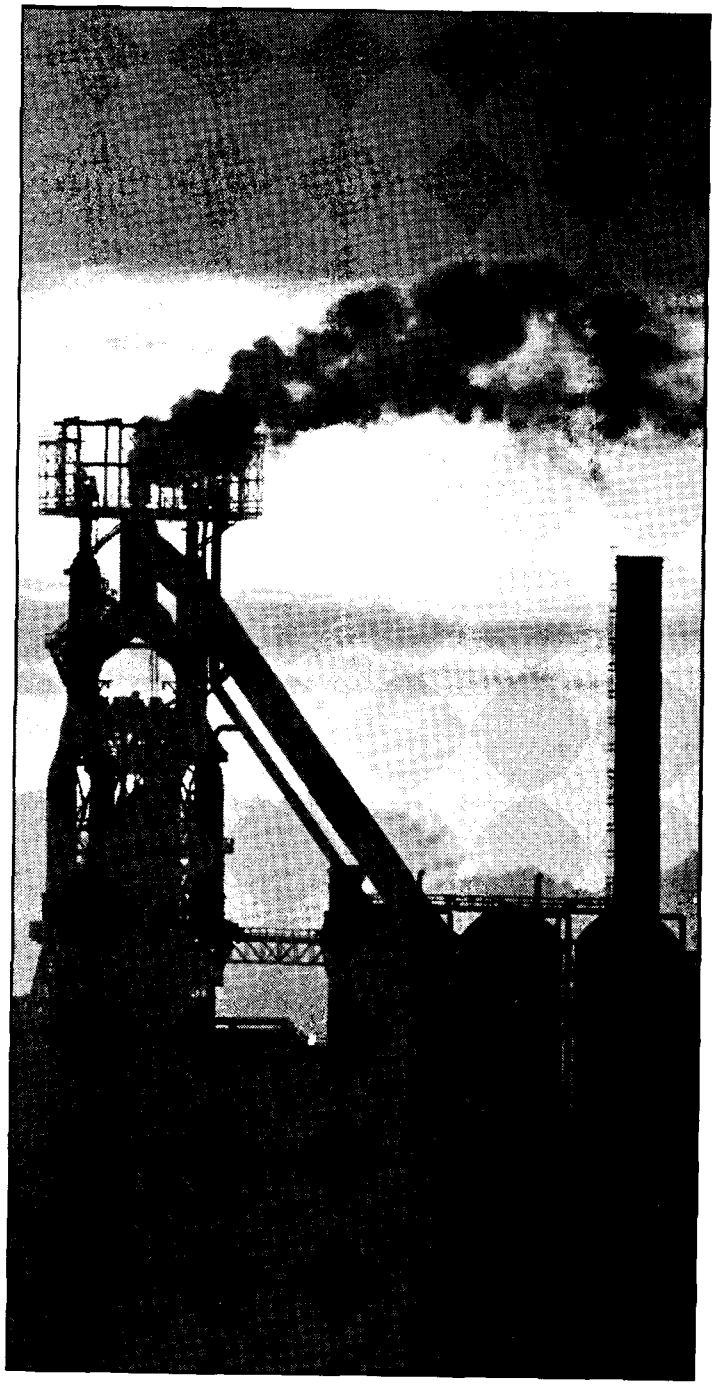

photo John Sturrock/Network

In 1979, the Welsh electorate wrote finis to two hundred years of Welsh history. They rejected every tradition to which the modern Welsh had committed themselves. They drove into bankruptcy every political creed which the modern Welsh had embraced.

In March, on their St David's Day, they crushed by a four-to-one majority a pallid measure of self-government proffered them in its last Tammany days by a Labour administration under pressure from Scots. They broke spokesmen and mentors, some self-appointed but some quite genuine, like worn-out old pick-handles and they shrugged off Welshness like a shabby old moleskin jacket.

In May, an even sharper shock; they stampeded in such numbers to the Tories that they overthrew a political tradition rooted in Wales for a hundred and fifty years. Welsh political life, unlike English, has been characterised by abrupt revolutions in personnel, ideology and style which inaugurate long one-party eras, virtually *régimes* in the European sense. The long Liberal hegemony reached a climax in 1906, when not a single Tory MP was returned from Wales. After a brief upheaval, it was succeeded by Labour which by 1966 had almost equalled its totality. In 1966, British capitalism began to crack and so did Welsh Labour. The Tories began to inch back. The long, hard struggle of populist, Non-conformist and radical Welsh had expelled landlords and the Church as 'aliens' from the Welsh community and Welsh historiography; not so long ago, it looked as though the Tories were going to follow them clean out of Welsh politics and Welsh history. In 1979, the Tories swept with such force through non-industrial Wales that they obliterated landmarks which had been familiar for generations. Even within the Labour bastions of the industrial valleys of the south, their tide rose menacingly; for the first time, it became possible to envisage a serious two-party confrontation in those valleys. Stalwarts in the all-powerful council chambers who had just beaten back and contained a challenge from the nationalists Plaid Cymru, had to face the spectre of an oncoming English 'normality' (since succeeded by the increasingly corporeal presence of a shadowy SDP). In a spectacular election, it was Wales along with London which provided the Tories with their most spectacular successes, as Welsh Labour shrank back into the coalfields. There was a smell of 1931 in the air.[1]

And in June the Welsh, particularly in their strongholds of institutionalised Labourism, voting for committed anti-Common Market MEPs, rejected Europe so decisively as to register their region as the most British of all the regions of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and About a Half of Northern Ireland. In 1979, the Welsh Political Correspondent of BBC Wales considered resignation. 'Welsh politics' had ceased to exist, the Welsh had finally disappeared into Britain. First of the British, they looked like being the last.

A melodramatic history

Since the tenth century, a Welsh nation has generally been a minority among a Welsh people, who have survived by anchoring themselves within successive forms of Britishness. Modern Wales began to take shape within the *Great Britain* formed after the union of England and Scotland in 1707 and realised by merchant capitalism, imperialism, naval power, agriculture transformed into a capitalist industry and its monstrous capital of London.[2] In eighteenth century Wales, merchant capitalism with its rural proto-industrialisation had already made the country a sector of an imperial economy. Copper and tinplate, with 90% of British production focused on Swansea and Anglesey, the rural cloth trade directed at the Gulf of Mexico, the beginnings of iron and slate, were all directed to export. The 1790s saw the massive impact of the iron industry. Until 1841, every county in Wales registered a population explosion, with Monmouth and Glamorgan running first and third in the British coun-

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ties' growth lists. From 1841, rural Wales entered its cycle of depopulation as the south-east sucked people in, ultimately to lodge nearly four-fifths of the Welsh in that continuously revolutionising and increasingly English-speaking region. Industrialisation in the north-east faltered, though Gwynedd with its slate became another 90% of British production export centre. It was iron, coal and tinplate in the south-east which were the pacemakers to be succeeded by the substantial world empire of south Wales steel and rails and the gigantic world empire of south Wales coal. By the 1870s the marriage rate even in rock-ribbed Merioneth was dependent on the price of coal.

In response a new Welsh working class and a new Welsh nation clawed their way into existence. The first rebellions were directed against capitalism itself: the Jacobin troubles of the 1790s, the Scotch Cattle of Gwent, the Merthyr Rising of 1831, the first unions, the march on Newport and the early phases of Chartism. In the restabilisation and realignment of mid-century, there was a new mobilisation around a Nonconformist People against Anglican and English-speaking gentry and landlords. This created a 'nation' which formed along a language line which was also a religious and a class line and located itself within Victorian imperialism. This 'nation' broke into political life with the franchise reforms; the democratic revolution of the 1880s ended the rule of the squires, entrenched a Liberal middle class which, in its new secondary schools, its university, its museums and eisteddfods erected the framework of a pseudo-nation. Drawing on the realities of small town, village and colliery settlement Wales, it invented the operative myth of the *gwerin,* the classless, Welsh-speaking and cultured 'folk', to confront a new proletariat in a numerical majority, within an industrial Wales increasingly alienated from the institutions and ideologies, particularly the educational apparatus, of the 'Nonconformist, Liberal Nation'.

For this was also the climax of coal and the world empire of Cardiff, that 'American Wales' which carried the rest on its indifferent back. South Wales with its 270,000 colliers had become one of the most proletarian regions of Britain; labour, socialism, syndicalism began their revolt against Liberal democracy and its Welshness and the English language was embraced as the language of rebellion and liberation, in a process which intensified during World War 1. By 1921 the new power of Labour seemed poised to take over the dislocated Liberal inheritance. Instead, this victorious and populist Wales marched into an economic blizzard which destroyed it.[3]

> they stampeded in such numbers to the Tories that they overthrew a political tradition rooted in Wales for a hundred and fifty years

An Imperial south Wales

A melodramatic history which leaves its survivors living through the morning after a night before which lasted four generations. For a critical feature of the whole industrialisation process was the fact that Wales was completely out of step with every other region of the British Isles. The roots of its present crisis lie in the peculiarly *imperial* character of this formation of a Welsh working class.

British capitalism, with its virtual world monopoly and its imposition of free trade on the Atlantic basin, locked the economies of Britain and the USA into an Atlantic unit which worked like a push-pull oscillator. When British capital pulsed out into the New World, the British export sector boomed and so did the US economy, while the British home sector marked time; the reverse was true when that outward pulse of capital slackened. The continuously displace rural population, set in motion by the earthquake of industrial capitalism, followed the thrust of enterprise. Those 40 million and more Europeans who crossed the Atlantic to help make the USA the greatest capitalist power in the world accompanied the displaced people of the British Isles during those outward thrusts of British capital in 1847-54, 1866-73, the 1880s and 1903-1913.

Every people in these islands followed that rhythm with the startling exception of the Welsh. There was a drain of people out, despite rapid industrialisation, until the 1860s, but then Wales, unique in the British Isles, breaks from the pattern. From the 1860s Wales moves out of phase from England and Scotland in a continuous expansion to the outbreak of World War 1. During the tense 1880s, when American capitalist agriculture precipitated crisis in rural Europe and when over 100,000 people were sucked out of rural Wales, the rate of net loss out of Wales actually falls. It goes on falling until in the remarkable decade before the war, Wales registers the only plus in the migration tables before 1914 outside the USA. In the early years of the twentieth century, south Wales saw immigration of an intensity second only to the USA itself, an immigration which caused a social, linguistic and political revolution and has led some reluctantly to conclude that Wales has become two nations. The postwar depression was the more castastrophic precisely because of the export and imperial character of the previous growth (Fig 1).[4]

> Instead, this victorious and populist Wales marched into an economic blizzard which destroyed it

The south Wales coalfield expanded most when the industrial sector of Britain expanded least. The north Wales coalfield started to lose people from the 1860s, but the holiday districts in north and west began to grow. From the 1880s, the decade of its democratic revolution, the distinctiveness of Wales, which in essence means south Wales, became overpowering, to reach its climax in the oceanic 1900s. At a time when the relative industrial decline of Britain began to register, south Wales experienced a runaway boom in the midst of violent class conflict. Its hegemony over the rest of Wales established by the 1870s, south Wales was located almost wholly in the export sector of British imperialism; it was Britain's American frontier of industrialisation and a heartland of British imperial capitalism.

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[1] Brief, accurate and striking analysis in the *Economist*, 12 May 1979; note the map.

[2] I explore this process and cover the whole modern period in a volume of essays, *The Welsh in their History*, to be published next year by Croom Helm. I touch on it in *When was Wales?* the BBC Wales Annual Radio Lecture for 1979 which sold out in a couple of weeks but which BBC London refused to reprint; it will appear in the collection mentioned.

[3] A major new study of Wales since 1880 is K O Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (University of Wales and Clarendon presses, 1981); a different approach in David Smith, ed, *A People and a Proletariat; essays on Welsh History 1780-1980* (Pluto Press and Llafur, Welsh Labour History Society, 1981).

[4] This graph is taken from Brinley Thomas, 'Wales and the Atlantic Economy' in the volume he edited, *The Welsh Economy: studies in expansion* (University of Wales, Cardiff, 1962) where it is supported by several telling tables. The basis of the analysis is Professor Thomas's monumental study, *Migration and Economic Growth* (Cambridge, 1954 and subsequent revisions). I tackle the problem in detail in 'Imperial South Wales', to be published in *The Welsh in their History.*

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photo Steve Benbow/Network

For it was not simply a matter of coal. In 1881, the year Nonconformist Wales won the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, the first recognition of a distinct Welsh people by the modern British state, brash new Cardiff raised its merchant palace of a Coal Exchange; it got its university college two years later. Bute Street became the jugular vein of capitalist Wales. Not only did John Cory's bunkers straddle the world and south Wales coal keep the Royal Navy afloat; the capital, technicians and technology of south Wales acquired world power. They helped to distort the development of Spain, wrenching its heavy industry base away from Asturias into the Basque lands, where Cardiff and its hinterland were entrenched in Bilbao.[5] South Wales merchants bought up shipping companies and port capital in Le Havre, Rouen, Brest and Nantes. Italy, Argentina, Chile and Brazil for years worked to the rhythms of south Wales exports: for years the real economic capital of Chile was Swansea. The region first launched the steel of the Donetz in Russia and Pennsylvania in the USA.

> the major obstacle had become the grip of institutionalised Labourism whose connection with socialism had become as mythical as the Mabinogion

The greatest editor of the *Western Mail* was one of Cecil Rhodes' men and the new Welsh bourgeoisie in its new Welsh press repeatedly compared the Welsh to the Japanese, as an old people finding a new role. Even Scott's mission to the Antartic found a base in Cardiff which, after the Klondyke climax of the First World War, earned the nickname of Lloyd George's City of Dreadful Knights. In the middle of that war, the economist Stanley Jevons could predict a British world empire centred on south Wales.

Two cultural symbols of this simultaneously Welsh-populist and British-imperialist identity have proved memorable. There was David Lloyd George, leaping like a Magic Goat from the aggressive middle class of north Wales now on the offensive against Anglican landlords and creating a Welsh nation in its own image, into Downing Street and to the pinnacle of British imperialism. And there was Welsh rugby which after an initial struggle became the Welsh game *par excellence,* the only field where it was possible to be simultaneously Welsh and a gentleman (normally a difficult undertaking), where doctor and lawyer could ruck happily shoulder to shoulder with miner and where Wales, safely lodged as a major directive element within British imperialism, could express its now self-confident identity in a continuous eisteddfod of Grand Slams and a continuous rugby-dinner chorus of God Bless the Prince of Wales. That simultaneously Welsh populist and British imperialist character Welsh rugby has not lost.[6]

It was precisely this export Disneyland which was brought crashing after 1921 by the slump which hit the very industries it was based on. The outlines of that depression are dismally familiar. South Wales was deracinated. Nearly half a million quit, a fifth of the whole population; not until 1961 did the Welsh population precariously regain the level of 1921. The south Wales valleys became and to a degree remain a 'problem area', while into rural west and north began that flow of the largely English middle classes which started their cultural transformation. In terms of social disruption and identity crisis, the depression plays the same role in Welsh history as the famine in Irish.

The Labour Hegemony

But even at the depth of that depression, a new society was adjusting. The anthracite coalfield to the west was less hard hit and generated a largely Welsh-speaking leadership of the miners which swiftly passed to Communists. Together with more numerous Left Labour militants, they re-organised *The Fed,* the South Wales Miners' Federation, and made it an instrument of community survival. In a sequence of battles against non-unionism and unemployment which were epics and in a socialist internationalism vivid and alive during the Spanish Civil War and the era of the Popular Front, they and the people they mobilised saved south Wales as a human community; their experience has become a myth as the Labour Party remorselessly entrenched itself in the south and moved outward into rural Wales.[7] As the people drew Labour around them like some warm, rough blanket against the winds of the capitalist world, education in the control of Labour councils tunnelled an escape route for three generations of young people out of the pits and into the NUT, 'over-producing' teachers, as Wales had 'over-produced' printers and preachers before them, to make teaching the characteristic Welsh profession. Suburban, small-town and the spiv Wales of the black economy (which expanded mightily during the slump) had their own means and measures; new middle classes nosed their way from this populist tilth into the Labour hegemony in formation.

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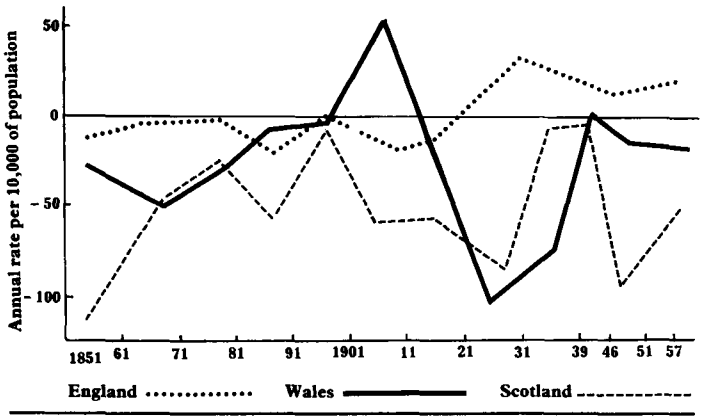
Fig 1 Wales, Scotland and England: decennial rate of gain or loss by migration, 1851-1957



Alene Strausberg

The reconstruction was started by rearmament and the war, and completed largely by the Labour governments of the 40s, assisted to a degree by Tory governments which embraced a form of social democracy during the long capitalist boom of the 50s and 60s. That social democracy anchored itself within the new forms of multinational capitalism; it civilised that capitalism and sheltered its people within it. It entrenched itself in the Labour establishment, where the myths and memories of the thirties and forties, still alive in the rhetoric and some of the practice of Aneurin Bevan and the small minority of south Wales socialist who fashioned themselves in his image, found institutional form. Three generations of Labour mayors, Labour councils, Labour institutions towered over a rival establishment in education and the media, particularly the nation-conscious Welsh BBC, the minority but strategically placed Welsh-speaking elite (Welsh-Welsh in common parlance) — the post-humous revenge of the displaced chapel ministers effected through their academic sons.

Social democracy became a recognised career structure in the life-cycle of able and ambitious south Walians; it provided the institutional framework for social life. Its hegemony was virtually as total as that of Liberalism before it and at times reminiscent of the Democratic polities of the southern states of the USA. It was characterised by a more humanitarian, civilised and educated society, by a genuine concern and an effective welfare state, by a genial and easy populism in style. It was characterised also by accommodation snug within capitalism, by the traditional Welsh blend of high thoughts and low thinking, by total dependence on Westminster and by ubiquitous petty nepotism and corruption, by a labour movement, for example, penetrated by Freemasonry

By 1966 only three parliamentary seats in Wales were not Labour, but by 1966, the major obstacle to the advance of socialism in Wales had become the organisations, the traditions, the practice and the populist grip of institutionalised Labourism whose connection with socialism had become as mythical as the Mabinogion.

It was in those mid-sixties that the postwar crisis of British capitalism first seriously hit Wales, as the Labour hegemony started to disintegrate, at first under the attack of a new Welsh nationalism. This was the start of the historical process of the realignment of multinational capitalism in crisis which will, unless it is stopped, end by shovelling Wales and the Welsh out of history, as you'd shovel small coal out of a disused cellar.

For look at what social democratic reconstruction within capitalism has made of Wales.

A petty-bourgeois Wales?

The reconstruction of the Welsh working population has been dramatic (Fig 2).[8] Most visible is the startling drop in the number of miners, now literally a tenth of the 270,000 of their climax and still falling, cut down in a programme of constriction which makes far less British and social sense than it does to a political economy dominated by transnational corporations. Steel, destroying over 40,000 jobs in the last few years, is following. These basic industries are still much more strongly present in Wales than in the UK as a whole but their hegemony has gone. Wales is much less distinctive and much less proletarian.

Scarcely less dramatic has been the rise of diversified manufacturing, largely absent in the past, towards the UK average.[9] Expressed in terms of a percentage of that average, the trend is clear:

> In terms of social disruption and identity crisis, the depression plays the same role in Welsh history as the famine in Irish

Mechanical engineering: from 58% in 1891 to 62% in 1971
Electrical engineering: from some 50% in 1911 to 70% in 1971
Instrument engineering: from 40% in 1911 to 62% in 1971
Vehicles: from 33% in 1921 to 73% in 1971
Petrochemicals and allied industries: from 60% in 1921 to 102% in 1971
Miscellaneous Manufacture: from 37% in 1911 to 64% in 1971
Construction has naturally fluctuated but broadly has gone from the 95% of the nineteenth century to the 105% of 1971 while

Fig 2 Employment changes by broad sector 1951-1976

Industrial Sector	Employment Change 000s 1951-63	1963-71	1971-76
Agriculture	-12.2	-10.5	-2
Mining	-36.1	-55.0	-9
Manufacturing (Ex. metals/shipbuilding)	+41.3	+40.8	-8
Metals/Shipbuilding	+2.4	-8.1	-13
Construction	+14.2	-4.7	0
Transport	-18.2	-11.3	-4
Other Services*	+76.1	+12.8	+71
Total Change	+67.5	-34.0	+35

*Gas, Electricity and Water, Distributive Trades, Banking, Insurance and Finance, Professional and Scientific Services, Miscellaneous Services and Public Administration.

(*Source:* 1951-63 and 1963-71, Moore and Rhodes, 1971-76 Digest of Welsh Statistics No. 1979, HMSO).

[5]The Spanish population in south Wales is a by-product of this connexion, as indeed was the tragi-comic episode of Cardiff's attempt to break the Bilbao blockade during the Spanish Civil War and the south Wales reception of refugee children.

[6]The record of the Welsh Rugby Union and of several Welsh choirs in their relationship with South Africa is familiar. The spectacle of Welsh choristers in red jackets provided by a capitalist buccaneer singing Hen Wlad fy Nhadau (Land of My Fathers) in the land of Boss and Soweto hardly calls for printable comment. A century earlier, the celebrated Welsh colony in Patagonia in the Argentine where they had gone to establish a Free Wales, at one time seriously considered shipping themselves off to that same stronghold of the free world.

[7]Hywel Francis and David Smith, *The Fed: a History of the South Wales Miners in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1980).

[8]Wales TUC, *Seventh Annual Report 1980* (Cardiff) p13.

[9]By far the best study of this process, which informs much of what follows is *Cyfalafiaeth a'r Cymry* (Capitalism and the Welsh; English translation in train) publishes by the Niclas Society, Cardiff, in 1981. The Niclas Society which takes its name from the Welsh-language Communist poet T E Nicholas, is engaged on serious historical and current research to direct action. It was heavily involved in the seamen's actions recently.

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transport has risen from the 55% of last century to a peak 125% in 1961 before shuffling back to 83% in 1971.

The trend, at least in times of prosperity, has been towards convergence. During depressions, however, the process is reversed and Wales moves away from the British norm. Told in terms of the gross domestic product by sector, the story is the same: it moves with the British rhythm, rising more sharply in booms, falling more steeply in slumps.

Yet more dramatic, however, particularly since manufacturing has been cut back severely in the current crises, has been the sweep of the tertiary sector of services. Insurance, banking and finance, of course, core of the modern economy, rank now hardly any higher than the 50% of the British average they registered a century ago, but the professions have climbed to a 88% which considerably understates their weight.[10] More striking still has been the irresistible advance of the distributive trades, the entertainment services, professional and scientific sectors (notably education and medical services) and public administration. They some time since surpassed the manufacturing sector. They now dominate the working population.

There are pockets of distinctiveness. The small agricultural sector, 150% of the British average, is declining much less rapidly than elsewhere, perhaps as a consequence of Common Market entry,

The NBC, for example, invests in the expropriated and coal-bearing lands of Australian aborigines even as it closes pits in south Wales

while the self-employed (9% of the working population of Wales as against the UK average of 7½%) are significantly more entrenched, particularly in farming, forestry and fishing. Moreover between 1974 and 1979, while every sector of manufacturing was cut back in Wales, the distributive trades increased by 3% as opposed to the UK average of 1.7%, miscellaneous services by 13.8% against a British 10.3%, and public administration by no less than 14.7% against a British average of 2.5% (Fig 3).[11]

In Wales today, out of a little over a million people at work, over 200,000 are in shops, stores, pubs, hotels, betting, restaurants and the like, another 150,000 in education and medical services, another 100,000 in banking and administration. The self-employed and the farmers remain significant. Communities are being turned into dormitories. Among a remorselessly increasing and structurally defined underclass of wasted human beings, those who have jobs cling to the state and the service sector. Can this working population be called anything other than 'petty bourgeois'?

Within the shrinking manufacturing sector, furthermore, multinationals are established in some strength. By 1974 foreign based multinationals accounted for anything from a fifth to a quarter of Welsh manufacturing industry; in chemicals, instrument and electrical engineering, they were near a third. About 90% of them were American, though European conglomerates were present and the Japanese have since penetrated in some force.[12] British based multinationals operate in a manner which is indistinguishable. The nationalised industries have not only been subjected to the service of multinationals, they are enmeshed with them. The NCB, for example, invests in the expropriated and coal-bearing lands of Australian aborigines even as it closes pits in south Wales.[13]

The overall pattern, then, seems clear. Wales is now much less of an imperialist freak than it was. Unemployment, bad as it is at 16%

Fig 3 Employment changes by broad sector 1974-1979

	Estimated employment 000s		
Sector	*Sept. 1974*	*Sept. 1979*	*Change 000s*
Agriculture	26	22	−4
Mining	43	38	−5
Manufacturing (ex. Metals)	254	236	−18
Metal Manufacturing	84	69	−15
Construction	67	69	+2
Transport	61	57	−4
Other Services	470	521	+51
Total	1,005	1,012	+7

(*Source:* DE Gazette, January 1976 and 1980)

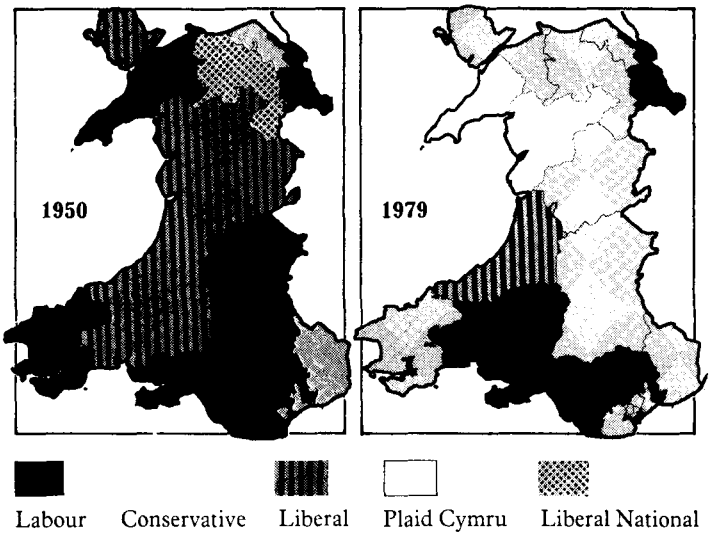
and still worse than the British average, is nothing like as grotesquely worse as it was in the 1930s. Peculiarities remain, in the over-representation of coal and steel and in the above-average shift into the service and state sectors; they become more visible and significant during depressions. But those peculiarities themselves are an exaggeration of a British condition. We Welsh are becoming the exposed nerves of the British.

And these forces do not operate in a vacuum. They play upon a Welsh people and a people in Wales already bizarrely distorted by capitalism in an earlier phase. The western and northern districts, thinly-populated and in slow decay, witness an immigration, largely rentier and non-Welsh, which in some critical places amounts to a colonisation. In this, its very *Bro* or Heartland, Welsh-language culture is in crisis. The first nationalist and social violence has broken out there, the first arson and the first bombs; there will be more.

In the industrial areas so massively peopled in an imperial past, behind the spectacular disasters such as the devastation of Deeside and the degutting of the Merthyr Tydfil dominated by Hoover's, all life is being systematically drained away to those coastal strips which are becoming coasts of the Europe of the multinationals. This seepage empties Wales' hollow heart to the point of vacuum. It sucks life and spirit out of those cordons of working class communities which are being transformed into commuter beds of atomised individuals. These pressures, massively reinforced now by those of a government determined to save British capitalism at the expense of British working people, hammer at the long-established and rival Labour and Welsh-Welsh establishments entrenched among their now disintegrating clienteles, populist and elitist.

They play remorselessly upon the Wales TUC created less than

The Tory advance in Wales: General Election results of 1950 and 1979



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ten years ago to advance the cause of socialism in Wales. Of the 75 organisations affiliated to the Wales TUC, 13 have officially reported a drop in membership, notably the NUM and the EEPTU; probably most of them have fallen back. The unions which have grown are the white-collar ASTMS, CPSA, TASS and NALGO (which is not even affiliated, as an organisation, to the Labour Party) and the ambivalent NUPE. The Wales TUC recently published a Social Plan for Wales which is a corporatist and rightwing Labour document. Only an alliance between NUPE and the NUM stopped it, probably temporarily.

Derek Gregory of NUPE who opposed the Social Plan, promptly lost his foothold within the Labour Party. The Wales TUC is enmeshed with the solidly rightwing power of that party, which is committed to Healey in its weighty bulk, with a few bold spirits dipping a toe into Silkinism. The pygmy left of Welsh Labour is the Kinnock wing of Tribune which so effectively blocked the advance of militancy at the last Labour Conference as it had earlier blocked even the most insipid and gormless effort to restore some measure of control over their own lives to the people of Wales.[14]

Even as the Thatcherite blitz strikes, as the service sector begins to lose its 13,000 people to accompany the 35,000 recent victims from industry, the response from Wales is puny. There have been explosions of anger and momentary outbreaks; there is a smouldering resentment. The miners staged their brief and brilliant campaign over pit closures and coal imports to force the government into a bizarre and suspicious retreat; there were moments during the strikes of the steelmen and the civil servants. But there was also the humiliating failure to achieve miner-steelworker unity, there was and is the accommodation and the resignation, whether at Hoover's or elsewhere. Anyone who went on the Welsh leg of the People's March for Jobs and other demonstrations in Wales will have become familiar with a dismal routine. Loud and sometimes melodramatic calls for action from leading figures of the Wales TUC and Welsh Labour who were then conspicuous by their absence; a much more sluggish and tortured rally than in England except, characteristically and bracingly, when a march entered a district, however depersonalised, with an inherited tradition of militancy or moved into those inner-city or satellite town districts of unfocused anger and the fraternity of the fragmented. This Gideon's Army was no less familiar: individuals, often well known, often veterans from the mainstream labour movement, the Communists, assiduously practising that polite and self-effacing anonymity which makes them the Invisible Man or Unholy Ghost of the resistance, leftwing Welsh nationalists, usually young, the Marxist groups in distanced but sufficient fraternity, IMG, WRP and the rest, a handful of anarchists and a running flank guerilla, generally reminiscent of a bar-room brawl, with punk rebels proclaiming allegiance to the SWP.

A crisis of representation

Certainly a Britain in structural crisis also suffers a crisis of political representation, of representation in general and class representation in particular. Gramsci analysed just such a crisis in the Italy of the 1920s when parties, the 'nomenclature' of social classes, lost meaning, coherence and purpose, a process visibly at work in Britain. In Wales the crisis of representation is peculiarly suffocating. Any extra-terrestrial observer would surely note than Wales has a minority but potentially effective cadre of socialists, paralysed and negatived not only by their fragmentation between the familiar Labour Party Left, Communists and Marxist groups but by the contradictions between all of them and the Welsh national movement.

Plaid Cymru (The Welsh Party) originally Pétainist in inspiration, transformed itself into a social democratic party in the fifties, rocked Labour strongholds in the valleys with its protest votes and took three parliamentary seats; it still holds two.[15] Now pushed back to an electoral 10%, it can still mobilise enough militants to challenge Labour which has long since ceased to be a mass party except in the sense of the passive clientelism of an establishment. Plaid Cymru undergoes a crisis precisely parallel to that of Labour; its Marxist wing grows and presents an at present perplexing concept of a National Left. The same thrust throbs through Cymdeithas yr Iaith Cymraeg (Welsh Language Society), hitherto successful in its militant and extra-parliamentary activity. The trend is visible in the emergence of a Welsh Socialist Republican Movement, ambiguously placed, distinctly ultra-Left in tone and repeatedly at grips with the police.

There are other, less party-centred movements: Cofiwn (Remember!) which systematically uses a semi-mythical history as a weapon; the Niclas Society, a Cardiff-based group, strongly communist (with a small c) in persuasion and strongly Welsh in character, which seriously uses history as a building tool. Confronting them all is Adfer (Reconstruct!) a sometimes chilling movement. It works to a two-nation perspective; the Welsh-speaking Welsh, the 'real' Welsh are the *Cymry* (the Welsh name for themselves); the rest, unfortunately in a huge majority, are 'Welshmen' (the English name for us). Adfer intends to a build a monoglot Welsh Gaeltacht in a western *Bro* (Homeland) from which it will, in the remote future, advance to the liberation of the hybrids in the rest of Wales. In this cause, which commands the allegiance of increasing numbers of Welsh speaking youngsters and intellectuals, it is prepared to use radical means. And

> all life is being systematically drained away to those coastal strips which are becoming coasts of the Europe of the multinationals

beyond them all is the shadow-land peopled by small groups with big names, Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru (Welsh Defence Movement) Eagles of Eryri (Snowdon), Guardians of Wales, the Meibion (Sons) of some holy place or person, the Workers Army of the Welsh Republic and the recent Rhys Gethin who sounds like a Welsh translation from a Provisional Gaelic, the people who light the fires and plant the bombs.

If the Welsh language had gone the way of Gaelic, Welsh nationalism would probably be stronger and more leftwing. The campaign for the Welsh language, waged largely by young socialists, was a heroic and dedicated crusade. Despite the unappeasable appetite and frustration of nationalists, it has in fact achieved a success in

[10] A large proportion of Welsh professionals, particularly teachers, are of course in England. This would also be true of the dread 'polyocracy' of our enemies, who are almost certainly over-represented among the Welsh. This 'over-production' of what Gramsci called 'intellectuals' has been a feature of Welsh life since the 18th century, something of a parallel to the proletarians among the Irish.

[11] Wales TUC, *Seventh Annual Report 1980*, pp.14, 35.

[12] Glyn Davies and Ian Thomas, *Overseas Investment in Wales; the welcome invasion* (UWIST Cardiff, 1976); information from the Communist Party in Wales and from the Niclas Society, notably Brian Davies.

[13] Of relevance to Wales are the striking Niclas Society pamphlets, *Who profits from coal? Where have all the steelworks gone?, Why seamen are angry* and their contribution to the bulletin of the Cardiff NUS Disputes Committee (ed Tommy Hanley) *The Welsh Seamen* no 3 (January 1981).

[14] Essential here are the informed and cogent commentaries in *Rebecca*, the socialist and investigative monthly re-launched in September 1981 and now on its third issue.

[15] Comments here on the left nationalist movements and the struggle for the Welsh language merely sketch the problem critically for the whole Welsh Left; a study in depth and fraternity is called for and will be produced.

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shifting a British state, ruling an indifferent or hostile population, into a positive discrimination in favour of the Welsh language which has few parallels outside the Soviet Union. Wales is today officially and visibly a bilingual country (to the intense irritation of many). Whole structures have been created in education and the media and now in the Fourth Channel. As with all such nationalist movements, it has also served and has been judiciously helped and exploited by an establishment already at loggerheads with Labour and already entrenched in the more characteristic Welsh institutions, themselves already distanced and sometimes divorced by history from a majority of the Welsh people.[16]

To many Welsh working people, what they were confronted with were Welsh schools which seemed to be playing the role of English public schools, whole areas of employment shut off from them and their children, their own demotion to Saunders Lewis' former description of them as 'metics', half-men. They have seen government money pumped out to Welsh language publications and broadcasting while the majority four-fifths of the people were apparently

> in between, sheep, holiday homes burning merrily away and fifty folk museums where there used to be communities

considered by BBC Wales and HTV as unworthy of the Welsh language from their sets (scores of thousands trained fixedly on the Mendips to escape even ten minutes of the dread sounds) seems likely to make matters worse. Already cries are heard that the provision of English programmes for the majority will prove difficult, even as film-makers queue at the door of *Sianel 4 Cymru*, already there is the fear that the majority will once more have to hunt out a transmitter across Offa's Dyke. And this anger runs through people many of whom were once steeped in the Welsh language, the Communists of the anthracite, the late Dai Francis, Communist secretary of the Wales NUM who was a member of the Gorsedd of Bards of the Island of Britain and launched the Miners' Eisteddfod (bilingual in sharp contrast to the Welsh monoglot National Eisteddfod — which has also become Royal), T E Nicholas, the Welsh language poet who was a Communist, Idris Cox the veteran Communist hero who never ceases to remind Labour of its Clause IX commitment to home rule all round.

In recent years, this cleavage, which also equips two peoples with two different histories, two different memories, and makes those histories and those memories hallucinatory, has become viciously destructive. During the devolution referendum campaign, it was physically dangerous to wear a Yes button in some Merthyr pubs and I have known dysgwyr (Welsh-language learners) beaten up for their effrontery by exclusivist Welsh-speaking militants whose fanaticism borders on racism. A return to Wales after an eleven years' absence inflicted the shock of seeing whole cohorts of Welsh workers adopt an attitude to the Welsh language and most things Welsh all too hideously reminiscent of the attitude of Protestant workers in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland towards the Irish national movement.

The death of Wales?

The explosion came in 1979 in the 'grand refus' of Wales by the Welsh. Socialists in Wales since have been living through a trauma whether they are aware of it or not.

It is upon this society and these socialists that the blizzard of Thatcherism has broken. Small wonder that some, looking ahead, see nothing but a nightmare vision of a depersonalised Wales which has shrivelled up into a costa burocratica in the south and a costa geriatrica in the north; in between, sheep, holiday homes burning merrily away and fifty folk museums where there used to be communities.

In more serious terms, it is evident that Wales and the capitalist mode of production cannot cohabit. To the latter, the former is stale, unprofitable and redundant. The capitalist mode of production in its present historic phase makes highly problematical the survival of any decent, human society in these two peninsulas of Britain in which people have lived for a millennium and a half as the Welsh. Certainly, it is fatal to the production and reproduction of Wales and the Welsh as recognisable historic entities. If capitalism in Britain lives, Wales and the Welsh will die. If we are to live, capitalism in Britain must die. The only human force which can save us now is the living force of a libertarian communist revolution, in which hardly anybody in Wales believes.

In Britain, that means a victory for British socialism. The problems we face in Wales are British problems; the difficulties are immense and our enemies are powerful, but the opportunity is now breathtaking. In Wales those British problems assume exaggerated and distorted form. And we Welsh men and women who are socialists and communists and Marxists and Welsh, wrestle with them among a people who, two years ago, apparently tossed into the celebrated trash cans of history two hundred years of struggle, a century of radicalism and two generations of socialist and communist militancy which became a national legend, echoing Brendan Behan's desperate shout — 'Mother Wales, get off me back!' — and Mother Socialism, get off it, too.

What is to be done? □

[16] My 'Ambiguous Hero: Hugh Owen and Liberal Wales' in the forthcoming *The Welsh in their History.*

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John Munnion

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Santa in Crisis

Santa Claus looked at the graph on his office wall, and gave a loud, despairing groan. The tell-tale line had been dipping for months, but it now extended beyond the bottom of the chart and was plunging down the wall itself.

Things were bad — catastrophically bad. Production was down, inflation and unemployment were up, investment was zero. The experts were forecasting a terrible winter. 'The outlook for industry,' wrote one City editor, 'is so dismal that many industrialists are talking openly of emigrating to Japan and getting a job cleaning the lavatories at Sony.'

Santa, founder of an old-established firm, toy-maker to the world, was doing his venerable nut. He sat with it in his hands, wondering what the hell he was going to do.

Then he remembered the late Peter Finch in *Network*.

He got up, went to the window and flung it open.

'Hear this!' he shouted against the punishing wind, 'I am the boss of an old-established firm, toy-maker to the world, and I am going my venerable nut! Don't let the small businessman starve!'

Seconds later there came the sound of other windows being opened, and other voices joined Santa's in a swelling echo.

'We've had enough!' they chorussed. 'We're not standing for it any more!'

From some windows the cries rose to a scream, as their owners plunged earthward. A long line of unemployed stepped gingerly round the inert, shattered bodies.

'I suppose,' Santa said to himself, 'that's what they call the recession bottoming out. Well, that's one way ... the only ...'

He climbed out on to the ledge. He was steeling himself to jump, when he heard a cry behind him. Someone was tugging furiously at his red coat. It was Sally, his secretary.

'Don't do it, SC! Think of the children!'

Santa struggled to retain his balance on the ledge, his arms flailing. Sally braced herself against the wall and heaved. Santa fell back into the room, landing on top of her. They got to their feet.

'I suppose I ought to thank you for saving my life, Sal — but you really should have let me go.'

'Suicide isn't the way, SC. You'd never be able to live with yourself afterwards.'

'Haven't you ever thought of throwing yourself under a bus?' Santa said.

'Often — but you can't rely on London Transport. You mustn't give up, sir. Things could be worse.'

'That's true. We could be attacked by an army of giant hedgehogs from outer space.'

'We've got to look on the bright side,' Sally said.

'*What* bright side?' Santa said. 'Everything's going down the drain — here we are four weeks from Christmas, and we've got three million unemployed, factories closing, bankruptcies, cuts, National Insurance surcharge, Meg Mortimer leaving *Crossroads* — what is there to look forward to?'

'Tomorrow, SC — there's always tomorrow.'

'It'll probably be cancelled. Anyway, what's on the agenda today?'

Sally glanced down at her notepad. 'There's a delegation from the union due in five minutes. The BBC want you to appear in *Question Time* — oh, and we'll need a replacement for Dancer.'

'Am I responsible for the Royal Ballet, too?'

'No, sir — Dancer, the reindeer.'

'Why, what happened to him?'

'He got shot by Princess Diana.'

Santa groaned. 'As if I don't have enough problems. All right, Sal, do what you can — get Mrs Barbara Woodhouse to blow up its nostrils.'

'It's too late for that, sir. But leave it to me.'

'I always do.' Santa rubbed his brow. 'Reindeers — Rudolf, Rudi, the Tight-hosed Dancer — sorry, Sal, don't mind me. I'm going mad.'

There was a knock on the door.

'That'll be the delegation from the Federated Makers of Toys and Seasonal Gifts, sir.'

The FMTSG delegation filed in.

'Sit down, lads,' Santa said. 'And lass. How are you, Nora?'

'Still struggling, SC' Nora said, a stoutish woman with a warm, motherly expression.

'Aren't we all? Right — now what's the problem?'

Pete, the leader of the delegation, a Kirk Douglas lookalike, rubbed his dimpled chin.

'We're worried about redundancy, SC. You laid off 400 last month, half of us are on short time, we've pushed up productivity 30%...'

'Don't go on, Pete — I know the difficulties. We're all in the same boat.'

'Yes, but not everyone's rowing,' Terry said, the youngest of the three. 'We're working our balls off...'

'Speak for yourself,' Nora said.

'Don't put that in the minutes, Sal.' Santa spread his hands helplessly and turned to Pete. 'What do you expect me to do? I can't work miracles — not with this lunatic Government sabotaging everything.'

'Do you think she's an agent for a Foreign Power?' Nora asked innocently.

'Wouldn't surprise me, Nora. She's the end, that woman. Why, she's even cut my chimney allowance...'

'You won't miss it, not on what you're making,' Terry murmured.

'Now, now, Terry. Let's not get into a non-retrievable confrontation situation.'

'At this point in time,' Pete said.

'As you say, Pete — at this point in time,' Santa nodded. 'I'm doing my damnedest to keep this place going, but a claim over 3% would put the mockers on everything.'

'That's a bit simplistic,' Pete said.

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'You wouldn't shut down, would you, SC?' Nora said.

'Who d'you take me for, Nora? — Sir Michael Edwardes? No, we'll just have to bite the bullet and soldier on. We aren't stone-cold dead in the market — yet. We've got first-rate products — Teddy Mark 11, Pamela Stephenson Action Girl, the Rubber Rubik Cube...'

'We'll report back to our members,' Nora cut in. 'Can we come and see you again, SC?'

'Of course, Nora — any time. I'm not ME — oh, sorry — private joke. Michael Edwardes — M.E. — ME. Get it?'

'We get it,' Pete said. 'Funny isn't the word.'

Santa patted his arm. 'Don't worry. If the worse comes to the worst, we can always do a Tebbit and get on our bicycles.'

'You'll be lucky,' Terry said. 'They've closed the bike factory.'

The delegation got up, nodded briefly and left.

Santa sighed and went to the drinks cabinet. He poured a large whisky. 'Will you join me, Sal?'

'No thanks, SC — I've got work to do.'

'Quite right. Somebody's got to stay sober.' He glanced at the pile of newspapers on his desk, taking in the headlines.

'We're in the wrong business, Sal. We ought to stop making toys and change over to Trident.'

'There's not much call for them at Christmas,' Sally said.

The nation was watching *Question Time.* They had little option — BBC2 was off the air because of economy cuts, and ITV was showing the 14th re-run of the Royal Tour of Wales.

'Could we have the next question, please?' Sir Robin said.

'The camera zoomed in tight on an elderly man. 'Could the Chancellor tell us why he believes things are looking up, when everybody else says we're up the creek?'

Laughter and applause from the studio audience.

'Well, there you are, Chancellor, you've heard the question,' Sir Robin said. 'Would you care to reply?'

The Chancellor nodded benignly. 'Certainly. Things are bound to be difficult in the short term. We're not out to court popularity — we want to pursue correct policies. And that means getting our cliches right. We have to be competitive. Things have to get worse before they become intolerable. There's no alternative.'

Sir Robin turned to Santa Claus. 'What's your reply to that, Santa?'

'It's a load of bollocks,' Santa said.

The audience exploded.

When the laughter had died down, Sir Robin said, wearing his Intensive Look, 'Would you care to say why, Santa?'

'Well, it's obvious that...' Santa began.

'And would you also say what your alternative policy is? —'

'If you'll just let me...'

'...and bearing in mind that you're speaking as someone who's had practical experience of these matters...'

'I'm trying to...'

'And would you mind keeping your contribution short, as we're running out of time?'

'If you'll give me a chance...'

'Sorry, Santa, I'm afraid that's all we have time for. You shouldn't have kept interrupting while I was speaking.'

Sir Robin beamed boyishly at his audience. 'Thank you for all your questions, and thanks to the team for their stimulating answers. Next week....'

Talks between the union and SC were continuing in an atmosphere of increasing strain. After nine hours the two sides were no nearer an agreement on basic rates and a guaranteed minimum bonus.

At last Pete said, 'If you aren't willing to meet us halfway, SC, I can tell you what'll happen. There'll be a walk-out.'

Santa shook his head with infinite sadness. 'You don't want to talk like that, Pete. Strikes are bad news. They can never be justified — not even as a last resort.'

'Would it help if we learned Polish?' Nora asked gently.

Santa opened his mouth to reply, when Sally's voice came over the intercom: 'Sorry to interrupt you, sir. I've got Tokyo on the line. The deal's gone through, terms as agreed.'

'Er — thank you, Sal.' Santa looked flustered. The union negotiators stared at him in furious disbelief.

'You've sold out, you creep!' Terry exploded. 'Never mind Polish — we ought to learn Japanese!'

'Now wait a minute...', Santa began.

'You've been stalling,' Pete said. 'These talks are a farce.'

'I had no choice,' Santa wailed. 'It's the free play of market wossname.'

Pete got up. 'Come on, we're wasting our time. Everybody out.'

After they had gone, Sally came in. Santa looked sick.

'Sal, will you pop out and get me a short Japanese dagger? I want to commit *harakiri.*

'Afraid I can't, SC, I'm on strike.'

'Et tu, Brute!'

'Solidarity is beautiful,' Sally said. 'It's all right for you, SC — *you* won't be made redundant.'

Santa shook his head. 'How wrong you are! My life in toys is over. I've got the sack. Get it? Santa Claus — *got the sack* — oh, never mind.'

'You can always get a job dishing out presents to the kids at Harridge's' Sally said.

She turned to go.

'Hang on,' Santa said. 'Mind if I join you?' □

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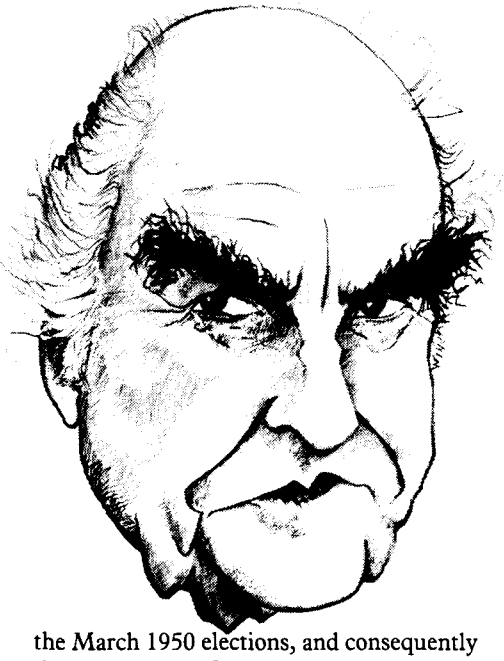
Greece in the hour of change



John Minnion/New Statesman

The party which emerged victorious from the October 18 1981 general election in Greece — the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) — had encapsulated its programmatic orientation in just one word: 'change'. And change, in more senses than one, is what the electoral result has confirmed.

The most widely advertised aspect of this change is the ousting of the Right from government after an allegedly uninterrupted domination of virtually fifty years. Its less talked about aspect is the consolidation of a socialist party as the main force in the Greek Left, outpacing by far and in a manner which seems non-ephemeral, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE).

Both these changes have been in the making for quite some time and must be seen in historical perspective. First, it would be an oversimplification to claim that the Right had maintained its control over the Greek government for about fifty years. It is nearer the truth to say that the Right had managed to emerge victorious in a series of decisive confrontations over the last fifty years, during which it also suffered repeated lapses from power and was even confronted by the prospect of its total political annihilation. The most serious of the crises it faced was during the revolutionary developments which accompanied the Nazi occupation of Greece (1941-1944). In that period the Right became totally discredited as a result of its collaborationist policies, the legacy of which was strikingly symbolised by the fact that the leader of the New Democracy — the main present day right-wing party — George Rallis, is the son, and apologist, of the wartime collaborationist Prime Minister John Rallis is still felt today.

John Rallis was Prime Minister of Greece in name only, not simply because he acted as a tool of the Nazis, but also because actual authority among the Greek people rested with the communist led National Liberation Front (EAM), whose army (ELAS) waged continuous revolutionary war against the Nazis, achieving at an early stage (by 1943) the liberation of about four fifths of the territory of the Greek state.

The challenge posed by these developments led, after the liberation of the country (October 1944), to a British — and later American — inspired counter-revolution, which reestablished the collaborationist Right as a dominant force among the bourgeois parties. Even so, it was not until 1949 that the counter-revolution managed to consolidate itself.

No sooner was the revolutionary epoch of modern Greek politics over, than the Right faced its first parliamentary setback, losing the March 1950 elections, and consequently the government for almost three years, to more moderate centre parties. It only managed to restore itself into governmental power in 1952 by the crudest exploitation of the spirit of divisiveness, suspicion and outright hatred which was the legacy of the Civil War. This legacy proved one of the Right's greatest political assets.

However, the very elements of strength eventually became elements of weakness for the Greek Right. Economic growth led to the restoration of self-confidence among the working classes which saw themselves reprieved of the extremes of poverty and uncertainty and in a stronger position than at the beginning of the fifties. Politically, the Right's insistence on its Civil War stance gradually started to inspire less terror and more resentment among a people increasingly keen to seek the way of national reconciliation. By the beginning of the sixties ideological anti-communism and the psychology of the Civil War were dead, including for the vast majority of the Right's own adherents.

It was essentially, then, in the early sixties, that the process of the decline of the Right started in earnest. The first big shock for them came when George Papandreou, at the head of the Centre Union party, won an unprecedented 53% majority of the popular vote in the 1964 general election (Papandreou had also won the 1963 election but his majority was not decisive), after a campaign against the police state maintained by the Right.

By comparison to the viciousness of that police state, George Papandreou's measures were really rather moderate, but even so they proved too much for the professional anti-communists bent upon protecting their 'profit-making enterprises'. Papandreou was unceremoniously and quite unconstitutionally dismissed in 1965 by Constantine Gluecksburg, then King of Greece,and two years later, in 1967, on the eve of a new electoral confrontation, the army proclaimed its own dictatorship.

The split of the Right

The dictatorship proved a castastrophic affair for the whole of Greece — and Cyprus — but also for its own instigators and perpetrators. Uncontrollable events swept away one of the traditional mainstays of all reactionary parties in Greece — the royal institution and establishment. Politically, the Right split into a pro-parliament and a pro-dictatorship faction. Then, after the ruinous experience of the attempted coup in Cyprus in the summer of 1974, aimed at the removal of President Makarios and the union of the island with Greece (a coup organised and ordered by the Athens military junta), parliamentary government was restored in Greece by a process of internal and international manoeuvring, the actual history of which still remains obscure. And, in this new situation, it was the pro-parliament Right that had the initiative. For a while it seemed as if the Right would be able to find a new face and convince the majority of the country that it was in a position to articulate the strong but not very specific yearning of the population for 'change'.

And to some extent the Right did take important, even historically momentous, steps towards such change. Its most significant measure in this respect was the one and only step that could have definitively put paid to the legacy of the Civil War and its attendant police-state justifications — the legalization of the Communist Party of Greece. This became a fact in the autumn of 1974.

Partly as a result of such encouraging signs, partly also as an insurance policy against a possible return of the colonels, the people gave the right-wing party of the 'New Democracy', then headed by Constantine Karamanlis, the present President of the Republic, an overwhelming electoral victory in November 1974, when the New Democracy scored a 54% majority. After that, however, the trend of its decline, which first appeared in 1963, asserted itself in 1964 and was violently arrested by the 1967 dictatorship, broke surface once more. In the

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November 1977 general election the New Democracy party scored only 42% of the vote (still retaining first place and the majority in Parliament) which was futher reduced to 36% (second place and loss of its parliamentary majority) in the elections of October 1981.

Perhaps, in terms of its record of political measures taken after the fall of the junta in 1974, the Right deserved better. However, it fell victim to long term pent-up resentment against its general social attitudes, its historical role, its historical image. Politically and morally the Right had been repeatedly defeated in Greece in the past. It was defeated during the German occupation, it was defeated in 1950, it was again defeated in 1963. Frankenstein-like, it managed to maintain itself and return by sheer violence, by armed violence and by violence to the laws of social development. In epochs of domestic or international upheaval, such violence was practicable. In the calmer conditions of the present day, the uninhibited preferences of Greek society asserted themselves. The Greek voters sent the Right packing in the hope that they were thereby exorcising an invidious and often atrocious past. This was the meaning of the PASOK slogan 'change here and now'.

The Communist Party of Greece

1963 was a turning point for the fortunes not only of the Greek Right but also of the Communist Party of Greece. Up until then, the Communist Party, outlawed after 1947 but active through the mediation of the United Democratic Left (EDA) — to all extents and purposes its legal representative in parliamentary life — had offered the only credible long term opposition to the Right. Its credibility rested on the strength of its commitment to an alternative social ideal and on its militant pursuit of the day-to-day issues of the economic and political class struggle. In terms of courage, self-sacrifice and devotion the Greek Communists, particularly when compared with the venality and brutality of the Right or the spinelessness of the Centre, really represented a different world — a different moral universe. Such attributes and policies enabled the Communist Party to maintain a lot of its influence and gradually even increase its percentage of the popular vote — despite its defeat in the armed struggle — until in 1958 with 25% of the vote in its favour it outpaced the Centre and emerged (in the person of the EDA) as the main opposition party in Parliament.

It was to be a shortlived triumph. Communists in Greece, who were outstandingly credible in terms of their commitment, increasingly suffered from a lack of credibility of a different kind: it became obvious that they would never be allowed to achieve anything practical by parliamentary means. Not simply that they would never be allowed to enter the government, they would even be ignored as a bearer of oppositional views. After 1958 the police apparatus, the administration and even the bourgeois parliamentary parties (including, at that phase, the parties of the Centre) made sure that this message reached every single supporter of the EDA.

The result of this post-1958 onslaught was dual and, in one of its aspects, quite startling. It did achieve the intended effect of frustrating EDA supporters and voters to the point of producing a massive defection. But the intimidation of the general public required for this operation had repercussions against even the Centre parties and ultimately persuaded George Papandreou to come out campaigning against the police state.

Having once taken the plunge, however, an astute politician like George Papandreou did not limit his campaign to issues of human rights. He extended it to all sorts of other popular grievances, beginning with the excessive subservience of the governments of the Right to the Americans and to NATO and ending with free higher education and the provision of milk for rural school-children.

The Communist Party had also joined battle with the Right on similar issues. But in contrast to it, George Papandreou had one great advantage — he was credible as an alternative prime minister. And as soon as people became satisfied that George Papandreou actually meant business with some of his promised reforms, they rushed to his support, reducing the EDA's vote from 25% in 1958 to something like 12% in 1964. As far as the Communist Party was concerned, the 1964 victory of George Papandreou meant that large numbers of its supporters — although by no means all — had finally come round to settling for half-a-loaf, a quarter or even one tenth of a loaf, provided it was 'here and now'. The prospect of a prolonged deadlock with the Right in government and a ghettoised opposition became more than they could bear. From then on, the Communist Party, from having been the main oppositional force, became a secondary force in Greek parliamentary politics. The last election, in which, having campaigned for a purely utopian, in present conditions, target of 17% of the vote, the Communist Party ended up with 11%; this tended if anything to confirm the persistence of that development.

The 'party of the non-privileged Greeks'

After the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974, Andreas Papandreou virtually carried on from where George Papandreou had left off. The titles of their parties were altered, but the underlying currents and issues within Greek politics remained broadly the same.

Some things, of course, did change dramatically. The most important was the legalisation of the Communist Party, which, at a stroke, abolished the function of a large part of the overblown repressive mechanisms in the country and at the same time stole a part

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of the democratic thunder from the hands of the leader of the opposition.

Other things did not change so much. The administration remained alienated and sullen towards the people, although no longer aggressively so. It also remained inefficient and, to a serious extent, venal. Furthermore, the Right, despite some fledgling efforts, did not in the end manage to make any serious headway towards a modern welfare state, the need for which in Greece is singularly urgent. Finally, the Right remained in its international relations in substance, although less so in appearance and proclamations, as subservient to the Americans as it had always been. Karamanlis, after 1974, toyed for a while with the idea of abandoning NATO and even attempted a French-style withdrawal from the military wing of the Alliance. His revolt however was short-lived, undertaken with probably cosmetic intentions, and was reversed after a few months without any fundamental reorientation in Greece's international position.

The result was that, while Andreas Papandreou was deprived of the human and civic rights plank of his opposition platform (after the legalisation of the Communist Party), he was on the other hand able to develop and deepen some other points of his programme, essentially in the direction of greater national independence (opposition to NATO, to the American bases in Greece and to Greek membership of the EEC) and in the direction of more socialist demands. The latter involved the promise of the gradual creation of a fully fledged welfare state, including a National Health Service more or less based on the British model, as well as a policy of 'socialisation' of some of the biggest industrial and financial enterprises active in Greece. Socialisation, as described in the PASOK documents, does not necessarily involve nationalisation.

In the Greek context, this is a programme of very serious political and even social reform which the Communist Party might gladly embrace — in the sense of a minimum programme. It does not follow of course that, campaigning on a Papandreou-style platform, the Communist Party would have had a Papandreou-type majority. The problem of credibility still weighs heavily with the public. Supporters of the Left (broadly defined to include PASOK) believe that Papandreou will be allowed to put many of his promised reforms into practise. They do not believe that the Communist Party would be given (by the military and their international controllers) the same kind of latitude. This is the ultimate and invincible argument of PASOK towards the Left.

Andreas Papandreou is fully conscious of his peculiar position. He is confronted by a left wing public that has been schooled by decades of struggle, led by the Communists, at a time when PASOK was not even a gleam in its creator's eye. He is also confronted by a no means negligible, although at the moment distant, possibility of a resurgence of violence by the Right in some form or other. This predicament (which can obviously also be used as a weapon by him) makes him vacillate. He has often been accused of inconsistency: of being demagogically extreme against NATO, the Americans, the EEC or the 'plutocracy' one day, in order to appear mild and conciliatory the next.

It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that Andreas Papandreou is engaged in a trial-and-error search for an optimal set of policies: one that would maximise his electoral support without exposing his government too much to the danger of a military intervention. In itself that may be the behaviour of any parliamentary politician. However, in my opinion Papandreou's behaviour is, instinctively at least, understood by and approved of by the greater part of his followers. They participate in the search for an optimal, feasible policy. That is why Papandreou's obvious inconsistencies have not damaged his public image. That is also why those who expect a revolt born of frustrated expectations after a few months of PASOK government — with a swing of a considerable number of present PASOK supporters to the Communist Party — are, in my opinion, likely to wait for a very long time. The search for an optimal feasible policy does not end with the electoral victory of PASOK. People voted for 'change here and now', the emphasis being on the 'here' and the 'now', ie on feasibility. They will not be easily deflected from that course.

> The dictatorship proved a catastrophic affair for the whole of Greece

Papandreou himself has responded to this aspect of his political behaviour by insisting that socialism always remains PASOK's ultimate goal but that on the way to this goal there are many intermediate stops and by-passes.

Does this mean that PASOK is essentially a social democratic party? I do not see any way of avoiding such a conclusion. Papandreou himself has described PASOK as 'the party of non-privileged Greeks'. It is the first time in Greek politics that the majority party espousing the cause of social change describes itself by a class-neutral formula. Non-privileged Greeks can obviously be found in all social classes, more so certainly among the workers and peasants but also among the petty and even the not-so-petty bourgeoisie. In itself this avoidance of a class-commitment, particularly by a self-styled socialist party, says a lot about its character. On the other hand even a social democratic party in government can be a very great improvement on rightwing rule. It certainly is such an improvement in the Greek context.

Will it last?

The question is, will it last? Barring violent internal developments which do not seem very likely at the moment, it has every chance of doing so. The electoral victory of PASOK was not a result of a shift in the floating vote — although short term factors (25% inflation, zero and even negative economic growth in real terms) have undoubtedly been at work. The landslide character of the victory can only be understood as the culmination of long term trends which will not easily be reversed. With time, the short term tactical element of the October 1981 vote (as distinct from the long term reorientation of a large section of the former Communist Party supporters that took place around 1964) will certainly weaken. Both Communist Parties currently active in Greece are likely to benefit from such a weakening, but not decisively.

Given a long tenure in office, how is PASOK likely to evolve? There are two possibilities. One is that it will emphasise its nationalistic element — particularly if the confrontation with Turkey becomes much worse than at present. If not, it is only the socialist element in PASOK that can gain the upper hand. In many ways this is the better alternative. Greek social democracy — a newcomer on the political scene of the country — has to find its course and exhaust its potentialities before a next step can be seriously contemplated. From that point of view the victory of PASOK opens the way for Greece to acquire the political structure of most European countries. Greece, of the heroic recent revolutionary past, will become, under PASOK, a mixed economy, welfare state society. It does so with a time-lag over the rest of Europe. The time-lag is the price it paid for the revolutionary aspirations of its people. But it is now set on its way of becoming a European country. Just another European country. It is perhaps ironical that along this road it is led by a party which proclaims its intention of abandoning the European Economic Community. □

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Ireland's Intractable Crisis

Exclusive Interviews with UDA and Provisionals

INTERVIEW WITH THE UDA

The Ulster Defence Association (UDA) is by far the largest Loyalist paramilitary body in Northern Ireland. Its membership is mainly working class, and both MPs and clergymen are excluded from the organisation. The UDA was the main force behind the Ulster Workers Stoppage which wrecked the Sunningdale Agreement in 1974 and destroyed the power-sharing executive set up by Britain. In recent years its leaders have become increasingly political in orientation and the UDA is now contesting elections under the name Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party. In 1979 the organisation produced a programme entitled *Beyond the Religious Divide,* calling for an independent Northern Ireland in which the civil liberties of all citizens would be guaranteed by a Bill of Rights. Despite its shift towards conventional politics, the UDA still maintains a clandestine force, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, who admit responsibility for a number of recent killings in the province and for the attack which seriously wounded Bernadette McAliskey.

In the following interview **ANDY TYRIE** and **JOHN McMICHAEL** from the UDA explain to **Bob Rowthorn** their view of the situation in Northern Ireland. Andy Tyrie is Chairman of the UDA and John McMichael is Chairman of its political wing, the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party.

Would you like to start by saying something about your organisation, how it came into being?

JM The Ulster Defence Association grew up out of small Protestant vigilante groups. As the IRA campaign mounted after 1969, people living in houses and housing estates would band together maybe five or six men, and they'd go out and patrol the streets after dark. Now they weren't armed, they may have carried a stick, or a walking stick, but they weren't armed with guns. It was more through frustration than anything that they did this because physically they were able to do very little against an IRA attack team. Later these organisations became bigger and the people who lived in one street in a vigilante group got together with a vigilante group from another street, then the whole estate, then a group of estates. Then eventually I 1971 these different areas such as the East Belfast Defence Association, the Lisburn Defence Association, the Shankhill Defence Association, the Woodvale Defence Association, the Comber Defence Association all came together and formed the Ulster Defence Association.

The campaign of violence from the IRA was continually increasing and it became more and more apparent that the security policy being enforced by Stormont parliament and the Westminster government was completely ineffective. There didn't seem to be any will to defeat the Provos. So the Protestants copied the Provisional IRA and we became involved in very deep sectarian violence which lasted for a number of years. In 1972 almost 500 people were killed, and we have little doubt now that most of those people died, whether they were Protestant or Catholic, because they were of the wrong religion in the wrong place at the wrong time. Such was the deep sectarian division and fear within Northern Ireland. Since then we have tried to move away from sectarian violence and we believe we have been successful. Since 1977 we have emphasised more and more within the UDA that we should seek a political solution. We have formed now our own political party, the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, and we now accept that there can be no military solution in Northern Ireland. There must be a political solution, there must be political dialogue. And there must be a state brought about and created within the bounds of what is now Northern Ireland, the Six Counties, which can attract a common allegiance of both Protestant and Catholic. And this is the point we're at at the moment.

The Ulster Defence Association was the organisation that ran the Ulster workers stoppage in 1974, wasn't it?

JM: That's correct. The Ulster Defence Association was the backbone of the 1974 constitutional stoppage against the Sunningdale Agreement. This Agreement set up a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland. More important there was a clause in the Agreement referring to a Council of Ireland which would be the framework of eventually a united Ireland parliament, one parliament for all Ireland. Powers would gradually be devolved to that parliament. This to Ulster Loyalists was a united Ireland naked, a naked threat of a united Ireland, something which they could not tolerate. The politicians wouldn't do anything about it so the people decided to do it for themselves, and they overthrew for the first time in a long

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while, since the days of Oliver Cromwell, the wishes of the Westminster parliament. The politicians in Northern Ireland didn't really want anything to do with the stoppage because most of them believed we couldn't succeed.

AT: The politicians never provide the necessary leadership, because when the crisis does come about they hide and leave it to the people. We provided the soldiers because we thought the politicians would be the officers and they would have the courage of their convictions. In private they gave us this blessing but in public they would not come out and be the officers. So we did all the things that were expected of us and got deeply involved in violence. We are seen as the thugs and the gangsters, the bully boys, but if you have a look deep into the situation you realise who the thugs and the gangsters and the bully boys really are, the only difference is they're still wearing their masks.

In recent years quite a gulf has opened up between you and Ian Paisley.

AT There's a gulf opened up between us and all politicians because of our own political ideas.

JM: Because our vision of a peaceful Ulster is contrary to the traditional view, namely Unionists and Republicans.

AT: You also have to remember that because we're not controlled by the politicians, they are now trying to create their own paramilitary organisations. They bring them out every six months to scare the life out of the Provos and every time they do it the Provos plant more bombs and shoot more people. If they think parading and marching about the mountains is going to scare the Provos they're living in cuckoo land.

How do you see the question of the Provisionals being solved?

JM: The Provisional IRA is only this generation of a problem that has gone on for 600 years. The Republican and the Irish nationalist movement has been trying generation after generation to remove the British from Ireland. We believe that the whole basis of the Provos' motivation is that they are caught up in this tradition. From their point of view the war is aimed at the British occupational forces. If the British were not part of the Northern Ireland situation the basic motivations of the average Provo, especially the young people, would be removed, would be diffused. Certainly a small number of people in the Provisional IRA movement or the NiLA would be thickly tied up in a sort of left wing worldwide communist movement, but every country of the western world faces such small tireless organisations and it would be no different here.

> So the Protestants copied the Provisional IRA and we became involved in very deep sectarian violence

AT: You also have to understand the conflict here. It's not always been the case of simply the Roman Catholic population wanting to remove the British from Ireland. You find quite a lot of Protestants wanting to remove them also because they victimise us as well. But even with the big parades and the marches and demonstrations we don't believe that the Catholic population supports the Provisional IRA violence. We honestly believe that, from both points of view now, if there was a proper constitutional arrangement here to suit both communities, you'd find there was an awful lot of Catholics and Protestants here who would find more in common with each other than they do with the British government or even the Dublin government.

Could you explain what you mean by 'a proper constitutional arrangement'?

JM: We're not against Catholic participation in the state and institutions of the state, but we believe there must first of all be an Ulster parliament here which will be for the benefit of all the Ulster people. We have to have a completely new system here which can gain the support and the trust of both communities. The Catholics distrust the British system of government; the Protestants distrust any change in that system, which involves Republicans. So we believe that eventually there must be an independent Ulster which attracts the allegiance of both Ulster Protestants and Ulster Catholics. It will be much simpler to have Ulster Protestants and Ulster Catholics than British Protestants and British Catholics as it's basically broken down now. There is no likelihood that Northern Ireland will be forever peaceful within the UK. There is no likelihood that Northern Ireland will be peaceful if there is any attempt to have a United Ireland. So I believe at the end of the day there must be a negotiated independent Ulster state within the Common Market and as part of the Commonwealth.

The demands of the Provisional IRA seem to be gaining support in the Labour Party. What would happen if Britain decided to pull out, as the Provos demand, and called a conference to discuss the question of withdrawal?

JM: If the British declared that in, say, 1986 or in 1987 they would be withdrawing from Northern Ireland, it would add positive support to the Provisional IRA, who would appear to be the winners. On the Loyalist side, Protestants would be faced with the traditional horror of the thought of our race disappearing into an Irish Gaelic Ireland — Catholic Ireland; we would fear that our race would disappear as it almost has now in the 26 counties. We would adopt the usual traditional siege mentality which we've had since 1641 when 20,000 Protestants were massacred, which is probably the one thing which has moulded our siege mentality — the greatest fear that we have. The Paisleys and the Molyneauxs who seek power on the Loyalist side would play on this fear. The Ulstermen as in 1912 and 1914 would start to arm themselves and march about. In such a situation, suppose the Provos did stand down and the Protestants became more militant, where would that leave the Catholic community? Would they then start to resurrect the defensive nationalist organisations? Would the Provos then become a sort of attacking army of the Catholics? Would there be a stand-off situation? How could you have a conference where everybody's arming themselves?

What you are saying is that the Protestants would be determined to resist and that any idea of a negotiated unification of Ireland is unrealistic?

JM: It would be very unlikely.

The UDA has a policy for an independent Ulster which contains a bill of rights to protect the rights of the Catholic minority. Could you explain this?

JM: There is no majority in Northern Ireland, we're all in the minority. In fact we base our political framework on that fact. We wrote a constitution in our document *Beyond the Religious Divide*

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which laid down what we envisaged as the type of state we would like to live in. It would protect our rights and liberties, and we wrote it from a point of view seeking the protection of every *individual* in the state — not of specific minorities. We always fell into the trap of trying to write a constitution aimed at attracting the Catholics.

It doesn't mention Catholics explicitly?

JM: It's for everyone.

We have to take a bigger chance than the Catholics, because if we remove ourselves from the UK then that will be irreversible

Could I ask you some questions about this. There is extremely widespread mistrust amongst Catholics of your programme. They say it sounds very good, but in practice . . .

JM: Roman Catholics fear the setting up of an Orange State for an Orange Ascendancy and Protestants are frightened of independence. From the Protestant point of view we have to take a bigger chance than the Catholics, because if we negotiate the breaking of a link and remove ourselves from the UK that will be irreversible. There's no way that any future British government, after a sigh of relief that the problems were solved, is ever going to welcome back Northern Ireland into the UK. We're going to still be physically on this island. We would depend on the goodwill of the Catholics who would be the majority within the island of Ireland.

To get this project off the ground clearly requires a fair amount of Catholic support.

AT: That's true, yes.

So what do you think are the first steps towards getting that kind of support?

JM: We must have a parliament, representative of the Ulster people — a parliament which strives to bring about social justice. We must create here an Ulster within the United Kingdom at the moment and a parliament which will attract the support of the Ulster people — both Protestant and Catholic — and which will work for the Ulster people — both Protestant and Catholic. With a written constitution we have very little doubt that if such a set-up were put into operation, the Ulster people would turn away from Westminster more and more, and would gradually give their allegiance more and more to their own parliament. The divisiveness of sectarianism within our society would gradually disappear. Under the economic circumstances in which we live, as the Northern Ireland economy gets worse, more and more we will be driven together. If we could remove the immediate constitutional fear, we could work together to build towards a reasonable standard of living within Ulster. I believe that more and more of our people will realise that they've a separate identity from being Irish — and from being British.

Do you see an independent Northern Ireland as basically a capitalist or mixed economy?

JM: We believe in a mixed economy. We believe in private enterprise, we believe in reward for private enterprise, but we also believe in a welfare state and that those who cannot fend for themselves must be supplied for. We believe in private enterprise but with a social conscience. You have to look after the weak as well as the strong.

Do you think the aim should be to help local private enterprise from Northern Ireland rather than to invite in new multinationals from outside?

JM This is essential. Where we're beaten more than most people is in that we don't have any control over our economy. We don't have any control over our marketing, for the firms which are here. Most of these firms are based outside Northern Ireland and if they feel there should be cutbacks, they usually cut in Northern Ireland first, because we don't have a great political hammer. We must create our own industries.

Would you envisage having quite close economic links with the South?

JM: It's essential that we work closely with the South. Especially in agriculture and tourism, as things which would be of economic benefit to us both. It is essential that we establish an Ulster nation which is on friendly terms with the Irish nation and the British nation and the EEC. We're not talking about an independent Ulster which would be isolationist *à la* Sinn Fein, we're talking about an independent Ulster which would be interdependent with all our good neighbours in Europe.

On the economic front, you'd anticipate presumably a difficult transition period to full independence?

JM: Oh, indeed! We would require an economic subvention for probably in the region of 25 years but we wouldn't envisage any problems there. We feel that Britain would breathe a good sigh of relief at the thought of buying Northern Ireland off out of the UK peaceably. Also we believe that Northern Ireland, if a peaceful solution was brought about, would attract very considerable amounts of initial capital from Europe which would give us the chance to develop our own home industries. We don't want to end up as just a dumping ground for multinationals, but we accept that we would need vast amounts of initial capital to give us a start.

Apart from their long term commitment to a United Ireland, your programme seems to be rather similar to that of Sinn Fein Workers Party. (Official IRA — *ed*)

JM: Yes. Like us, they're a constitutional party. There are three main options before the Ulster people — constitutional options: to remain part of the UK, join with the South to form a United Ireland, or move towards a negotiated independent Ulster. We accept that none of these three options are really viable — at least politically, socially and peacefully viable — unless they are supported by the vast majority of both communities. Therefore, we accept that an independent Ulster couldn't come about unless it was supported by the vast majority of both communities. The Workers Party accept that a United Ireland couldn't come about unless it was supported by the vast majority of both communities and certainly in that sense we are in total agreement with them — that we must accept the wishes of the majority at any point in time. That makes us a democratic party. Unlike the Provisional Sinn Fein, which refuses to put candidates before the electors and refuses to work towards a united Ireland through democratic means. They're trying to bring a United Ireland about, using gelignite and bombs.

It's clear that the leadership of the UDA has made very big changes in the

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way it sees political questions over the past few years. How far is this also true of the rank and file?

JM: The first thing you have to understand is that the UDA is a large organisation. It came together for the defence of the community. Within that organisation there were people of different political views. The only thing that was a common denominator was the fear of being overrun by the forces of Republicanism or the fear of a United Ireland. As we developed our programme for negotiated

photo Jarrod Cassoff/Network

independence we took it to our membership. Now we're not saying our membership did somersaults and jumped up and down and said good god Eureka! It was a gradual process. Even now it's a gradual process. They understand most of what we're trying to do. They do accept that the British will not be here forever. They know that they're not Irish. They know that there cannot be a military solution. They know that there must be a political solution. And we have the support of the vast majority of our membership. Certainly they will disagree with us on different things within the broad concept. Our organisation is a para-military organisation, but there is far more democracy within it than people would ever begin to believe.

We are glad the hunger strike's over because it brought about a total polarisation of the community. Our people are just a cross-section of the general Loyalist or Protestant population within Northern Ireland. A crisis like the hunger strike makes all of them think differently. It made some of them more militant, more conservative, more fearful of the Catholic population in general. Well, hopefully that era has now passed, and now we can settle down to the hard work of promoting our ideas. It's not going to be easy.

Talking about the Provisionals, how do you feel about the demand for political prisoner status? You've said publically that you support special category status, haven't you?

AT: Oh yes, yes because our prisoners are in there for special reasons, they're not criminals, in no way are they criminals.

JM: But to pursue a belief when you know at the end of the day that it's not going to get anywhere would be foolish because its contrary to your compassion for the prisoners. We have to accept that no British government, for political reasons, is going to declare or accept anything which appears to be political status. We've gone beyond that. But at the same time we must accept that in 1968 there were only 368 prisoners within Northern Ireland. Now there are about 3,000. We believe that most young men who have gone to prison have done so because of the unrest in Northern Ireland.

AT What we're saying is that the bulk of prisoners who we support inside the prison are people who are in the thing because they believed it, or else they got caught up emotionally. They're special prisoners. They must be. There are special courts, special police, there's special every damn thing.

Could you say something about the relationship between the UDA and the Ulster Freedom Fighters, the UFF?

AT: The UFF consists of a group of people who are members or associated members of the Ulster Defence Association and they decided that the only solution to the problem is a purely military one. And their attitude is, well to remove active Republicans, and active nationalists, who are trying to overthrow what exists here in the form of a government. People who are assassinating or bombing Ulster people. The UFF feel they are justified in taking military action against them. Now, if that's the type of action they do stay strictly to, and do bomb and shoot only active Republicans, no way would the UDA disapprove of it. We would have no objection to it whatsoever.

> We believe in private enterprise but with a social conscience. You have to look after the weak as well as the strong

Am I right in believing there's now widespread suspicion of Britain amongst the Protestant population in Northern Ireland? Suspicion about British intentions?

AT: We do not trust the British government in any shape or form. And that is not only a fact, that is like a religion here.

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JM: Anybody who trusts the British government is either a fool or too young.

AT: Yes. And if you have a look at some of the things they have been responsible for over the years. Like we'll never talk to the Provies, then they fly them out of the country. And we'll not make deals, and they make deals. The British government, we know them.

> if they do bomb and shoot only active Republicans, no way would the UDA disapprove of it

Unfortunately the feelings are there but we can't prove all we know about them. But we know rightly what their attitude is, that it's the British government they're thinking about not the Ulster people.

Would you say that the experience of the last twelve years has made a lot of Ulster Protestants feel their future doesn't lie with the United Kingdom? Or at least half feel that?

JM Ask everybody here what their second option is to the Union and independence is never far out of their conscious thought. There's a key here that people must understand. The Ulster Loyalist and this includes a lot of Catholics, are deeply suspicious and resentful of the Westminster politicians, and wouldn't trust your parliament. But are deeply and emotionally and for a long time connected to the monarchy and the crown.

AT: Here's an example of trust in the British government. They had negotiations with the Dublin government and they were that secretive they wouldn't even tell people in their own cabinet what they talked about. And they wouldn't bring any of our local MPs to talks. They had Lord Carrington there and other top civil servants, but Margaret Thatcher didn't see or didn't think that we were mature enough to tell us what she was talking about. And this has been quite often the case. How many people has she talked to regarding the situation here, and how many different cabinet units have made decisions which they thought were best for Ulster without really consulting us?

Does this mean you are calling for some genuine democracy in Northern Ireland?

AT Oh yes... It must be the first thing.

JM: An Ulster parliament for Ulster people. And you're going to have to weigh up the risk. People are saying that if you bring a parliament back here it'll be a civil war. So what's the alternative? If you don't bring it back or if you do bring it back you're going to take a risk. They took the risk to take it away from us. They took it away and look what has happened over the last few years.

The important thing is that the parliament must not be set up either to institutionalise sectarianism as it did in 1974 or to create an artificial parliament, which is not a parliament at all. There must be a political set-up here which is recognised as democratic and that provides equal opportunity for all to be involved. And it must be real. The English and the Irish must encourage the Ulster people through that parliament. Everyone tells us that nobody can solve the problem except the people of Northern Ireland, but no one ever encourages us to do it. Each tries to come up with ideas that they think the Ulster people should fit into, and what they can't understand is that the Ulster people have a mind of their own.

INTERVIEW WITH THE PROVISIONALS

In 1970 the IRA split over the question of whether the immediate aim should be to reform Northern Ireland or destroy it. One faction, the Officials, argued for a stages approach to national unity, in which the existing state of Northern Ireland would first be democratised and then later, only after Protestant consent had been won, would North and South be unified. In 1972 they declared an indefinite ceasefire on the grounds that continued fighting would only alienate Protestants and make it impossible to win their support either for reforms in the North, or for the eventual unification of Ireland. The other faction, the Provisionals, rejected this approach and argued that Northern Ireland must be destroyed. Over the past decade, they have waged a prolonged military campaign designed to unify Ireland by force. Until recently, the Provisionals were in difficulties and their campaign was stagnating. However, they were greatly strengthened by the hunger strike earlier this year which won them considerable support, both internationally and amongst Irish Catholics. Although outlawed, the Provisionals maintain a legal political wing, known as Provisional Sinn Fein, which contests elections and conducts propaganda on their behalf.

In the following interview, **DANNY MORRISON,** editor of the Provisionals' weekly newspaper *An Poblacht,* explains to **Bob Rowthorn** his view of the situation in Northern Ireland. This interview was conducted just before the current IRA bombing campaign in Britain commenced.

What are the long term objectives of your organisation?

We believe in the 1916 Proclamation of Independence. We draw all our recent philosophy from that document, which was a socialist document, and it promised the wealth of Ireland for the people of Ireland. And it stood for Irish unity. We see partition as an obstacle in the struggle for the setting up of a democratic socialist republic. You can't have a socialist republic with partition as it exists now because of the way it divides the Irish people. So we see the major struggle as being to overthrow partition, to end partition, and that's why we support the armed struggle against British imperialism in the North of Ireland.

How do you see the role of Protestant workers in all this?

Well, first of all you need to trace the history of the Protestant people in Ireland which has to a large extent determined their political outlook. Although they were brought here as settlers by the British, Protestants played a big part in the uprising of the United Irishmen in 1798. And the founder of Irish Republicanism was a Protestant called Wolfe Tone. At that time, although the majority of Protestants still supported the Brits, large numbers of them were Republican and were dedicated to a liberal tradition. But after the Act of Union in 1820, the ordinary Protestant peasants and townfolk in the North were bought off by the British and became a sort of aristocracy of labour there. They were bought off with marginal privileges over their fellow Catholics. Their fellow Catholics were consigned to the poorest jobs, into insecurity. Inequalities were as broad on both sides except for the fact that the Protestants had jobs to go to, however badly paid they were. And of course you had the Orange Order which was set up to counter the United Irishmen and its philosophy of liberty and fraternity among mankind, and its internationalist message. The Orange Order fostered a religious division in Ireland. And as a result the people were always polarised along religious lines. And this had a direct effect on the political conscious-

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ness of the Protestant people. After partition in 1921, the ordinary Protestant working class interest in the North was tied in with that of the state and that of the Union with Britain. And that has remained so to this day. Apart from a short period in the unemployment

What do you think of the argument that, before national *unity can be established, the North must be reformed and the present gulf between Catholic and Protestant workers overcome?*

People have wasted 50 years of their lives trying to establish a socialist republic by first of all reforming the North. This is the line of the people who broke away from our group in 1969, and who have now just gone into political oblivion. (Morrison is referring to the Official IRA — *ed*). They think, and they're wrong, that you can create a socialist movement in the North, and a socialist movement in the South, and then the two socialist movements will coalesce. It's an impossibility because of the way that partition has dictated the political values of either community in the North. And that's why we believe that only through breaking the Union with Britain, and breaking the back of British imperialism in Ireland will the Protestant section of the working class eventually come round to a different point of view.

How would you evaluate developments within the Protestant paramilitaries? For example they are now admitting that Catholics have had a bad deal in Northern Ireland. And the UDA even talks about the need to break from Britain and set up an independent Northern Ireland.

I welcome any increase in independence of thought of Protestant workers from their bosses in the old aristocratic Unionist party. The thinking behind an independent Six Counties (ie, the present Northern Ireland — *Ed*) is not based on progressive thinking. The Loyalists have become disillusioned with British rule, number one because they saw Britain in April 1972 suspend their holy parliament at Stormont — the Protestant parliament for the Protestant people. They also saw the British government, through force of pressure from the IRA, have to talk to the IRA, and this was heresy and anathema to them.

Then in February 1973, because loyalists were really retaliating against the Catholic people and sectarian assassinations were very high, the first Protestant ever was actually interned in the North of Ireland. You have the Protestants from the UVF and the UDA interned in Long Kesh. And this wasn't cricket for them. So out of that began a thinking, well, 'I'm in here fighting for the Queen and yet the Queen has me in jail. The Brits have started to put us in jail because we are fighting the Catholic community and trying to curtail the IRA, so there's something wrong, so we'll have to find our own identity and what is our own identity?'. That was the momentum behind the idea of an independent Six Counties. And even some of them, although this isn't too widespread, some of them even turned round and said, 'if we get an independent Six Counties we'll attempt to lure the Catholics in by promising them power-sharing'. But there's no way that they'll accept power-sharing, they won't accept power-sharing even under the optimum conditions of a continued Union with Britain. So they'd hardly accept power-sharing with Catholics if they were able to achieve an independent Six Counties.

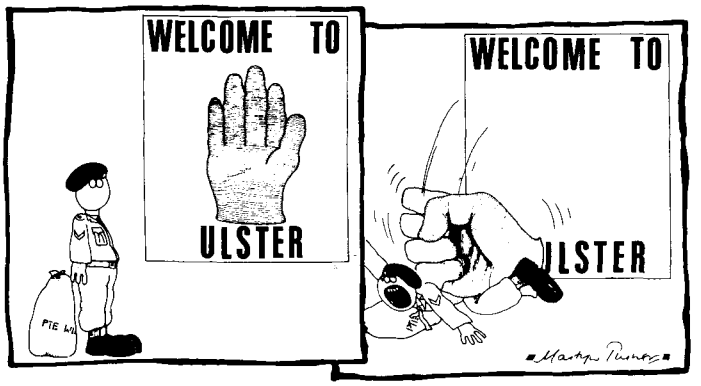
From my point of view, from 1921 until 1972, the Loyalists had an independent Six Counties. They had their own parliament which legislated independently of Britain, they had their own exchequer, the whole economy was separate from Britain apart from the link with sterling. They had their own independent Six Counties for fifty years and our experience of those fifty years wasn't very happy.

our experience of an independent Six Counties isn't a very happy one, and we would be opposed to it

There was internment in every decade for Nationalists that resisted the Loyalist rule in the North. Nationalist people suffered very high unemployment rates. Nationalist people were forced to live in ghettoes, or were forced to emigrate. And so our experience of an independent Six Counties isn't a very happy one, and we would be opposed to it, absolutely opposed to an independent Six Counties.

Don't you think there are some Protestant workers who accept the need for an accommodation with the Catholics? Even many of the Protestant para-militaries have called for a new relationship between Catholics and Protestants.

Right, but the problem is that they continue to shoot ordinary Catholics. And whilst there is a degree of duplicity as well, I recognise there's a big degree of confusion in their thinking. On the one hand they recognise that they have to do something to accommodate the Catholic people because the Catholics have had a rough time and whilst they're very late in the day recognising that, it's to be welcomed. But at the same time, they continue with the sectarian campaign which does nothing to ingratiate Nationalist people towards them or towards their thinking. We have a historical per-



spective of the Loyalist people in the North, the Protestant people, and as long as they are tied to the philosophy of Loyalism, any progressive thinking will always be subverted, it will always reach a dead end or it will turn back on itself and produce vicious sectarian violence. And, if they look upon the independent Six Counties genuinely as a progressive move, well then why don't they go further, why don't they help us root out the capitalist thinking in Ireland, help us set up a socialist republic. If they look into history, look into their own history, they will find that there were very many extremely progressive people from within their own ranks, who gave us our Republicanism. It was the Protestants who gave us our Republicanism. We want to join with them but they have to try and be a bit more empathetic towards the Catholic people, the history of the Nationalist people in Ireland and why we think the way we do. They haven't got, to my knowledge anyway — and I have spoken to Loyalist paramilitaries — a philosophy or rational understanding of the Nationalist people in Ireland.

Can I now ask you a question about your own movement? In the past there was always a strong secular tendency within the Republican movement, and even as late as the 1930s there was a certain measure of Protestant support in Northern Ireland for the Republican cause. But in recent years this has changed, and Republicanism now attracts virtually

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no support from Protestants in the North. Although many active Republicans are atheist by conviction...

That's right.

... they are drawn almost exclusively from the Catholic community. What do you think is the significance of this development. What problems does it create for you?

The IRA's position is to break the back of British rule in Ireland, demoralise the will of the British to stay in Ireland

The Republican movement does not defend Catholic theological interests. The Republican movement is a secular organisation. If the majority of its members come from a Catholic background, that's just too bad, that's an historical feature of the way Republicanism developed, the way the Six Counties developed. It's a product not just of August 1969, it's something going back to partition. As I've pointed out to you, Republicanism was founded by Protestants in Ireland, independent of Britain, to defend their own capitalist interests. They were persecuted by the Brits and persecuted by the Church of Ireland, the established church in Ireland. They moved towards a more radical position of universal suffrage and the rights of man, and our movement developed from that, from all that early radical thinking. There are still Protestants in the Republican movement today, but it's only a feature, it has got nothing to do with our thinking. It doesn't cloud our thinking because the Republican movement and the Catholic church are at loggerheads over their analysis of the way forward. We disagree with the special place that the Catholic church has in the present 26 county state. We believe in the separation of church from state.

Can I ask you about abortion and church schools? What would be the position of your organisation on these questions within a United Ireland?

The church's involvement in Catholic schools which are independent of the state-run schools has been politically important to us. However much we may be antagonistic to the Catholic church, the fact of the matter is that being in Catholic schools did maintain and keep alive Nationalist thinking here in the North. This thinking would have been completely undermined if the Catholic church hadn't insisted that they had their own schools in the 1920s. If Catholics had gone into the state schools we would probably all be Unionist by now. We would probably also still have been discriminated against. But we wouldn't have had the independence of thinking and the sort of philosophical background which has given us the energy to struggle against British imperialism and to bring down Loyalist rule in the North. I personally believe there should be no church schools, but I can understand parents wanting their children to be instructed in whatever religious persuasion they are, and I support their right to that.

And the question of abortion?

Personally speaking, I am against abortion on moral grounds, I don't have to go any further on that. Our movement understands and sympathises with women who have abortions or who feel they have to have abortions. The South of Ireland at present does not cater for women who want to have an abortion. But it is a difficult question, one which we have not come to terms with politically. I don't know what the position would be, I would find it personally very hard to legislate or to finance abortion if I was in government.

If Britain announced a very rapid timetable for the reunification of Ireland and said that by a certain date 'we'll be out and Ireland will be reunified', do you think there would be significant Protestant resistance to that?

Well, yes there would, because the Protestants would want to be blackmailing the British government into staying, or they would probably want to redivide the Six Counties along lines most favourable to themselves. And the way they would blackmail the British government would be through sectarian killings, by attacking the Catholic people. But whenever people say that there would be a bloodbath, they should analyse who's going to cause the bloodbath. The IRA is not going to invade the Shankhill or Sandy Row. The IRA's position is to break the back of British rule in Ireland, demoralise the will of the British to say in Ireland and to force the British into getting out of Ireland. When that is done there should be a democratic solution to the Irish question.

But the Irish people should be allowed to choose their own government by democratic means, and provided the Republican movement was allowed to engage in that process, and wasn't harassed, and wasn't placed at an unfair disadvantage, we would respect the will of the people. If the Republicans were harassed and persecuted in the course of such a withdrawal and weren't given the same rights as everybody else, then Republicans would reserve the right to resort to force. So what we are saying is this. If the British withdraw, whether or not there is a bloodbath depends on the scenario of that withdrawal. They have to resolve the question of how they are going to withdraw and allow the Irish people as a whole to determine their own future. They have to resolve the problem of what to do with the

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UDR and RUC (soldiers and police recruited locally mainly from the Protestant population — *ed*), who are armed Loyalist paramilitaries as far as we're concerned. Then the question is what are the Loyalists going to do? Are they going to accept that it's all over, that the merry-go-round is over? Are they going to accept a new future and a new Ireland in which we will hold out our hands in friendship? We would want to go forward peacefully. But if there is going to be a bloodbath, it'll come from the Loyalist people, because they will attempt to hold Britain and the rest of the world to ransom by attacking the Catholic people. If they do that, the IRA's going to defend these areas and there could be bloodshed from that. I'm not naive enough to think that there wouldn't be, but the extent of that bloodshed is dependent upon how covertly the British government supports Loyalist attempts to create civil war. The behaviour of the British government is a very important question and will decide how extensive the bloodshed is.

You seem to be opposed to the idea of 'Troops Out Now'?

No, no we're for it. We are for the total and immediate withdrawal of the British troops from the Six Counties. It's our slogan because you can't give the Brits the right to prevaricate around withdrawal. I would like them to get out in 24 hours if they could. They can get out as quickly as they like. In fact the Brits won't get out immediately for very strategic reasons. Because it would lead to complete destabilisation and of course a revolutionary movement can best gain from such a withdrawal. That's why they would not withdraw immediately. But it's not that we care about. We want a commitment that they get out lock, stock and barrel. If they leave behind 30,000 armed Loyalists in the UDR and the RUC, that's a recipe for disaster. The political thinking of the Loyalists would dictate an immediate invasion of Nationalist areas, something like the Zionists did in Palestine to try and consolidate their position.

So when you say you want troops out now, that includes disarming...

The RUC and UDR.

The slogan 'Troops Out Now' includes disarming the police and the Ulster Defence Regiment, the UDR?

Oh yes, oh yes.

Because that isn't clear just from the slogan. It always shows the British army on the posters, whereas you're saying in fact it's got to be more extensive than that.

Well, you see, the position is that in the country areas the RUC and the UDR do the harassing and the killing, and for that very reason the IRA bomb and shoot UDR and RUC personnel. Whilst the British army are based more in the cities, although they're also in South Armargh to an extent.

Can I change the subject now? What has been the effect of the hunger strike on the strength of and support for your movement?

Well, the British government, when they set out to carry through the policy of criminalisation in 1976, had a number of aims in mind. They wanted to break the prisoners, they wanted to get the prisoners to carry out prison work, to recognise the institution of the prison administration and to wear prison uniform. But the prisoners refused to wear that prison uniform or to carry out prison work and were locked up in solitary confinement. In March 1978 the prison administration, in a further attempt to break them, refused prisoners proper access to toilet and washing facilities, and in protest against that the prisoners went on the 'no wash, no slop-out' protest which lasted until March 1981. The hunger strike was a further demonstration that the prisoners consider themselves to be political prisoners, and have a political motivation because criminals do not go on hunger strike, nor do criminals think in terms of their fellow prisoner.

The Brits hoped to criminalise the prisoners, and by criminalising them to have criminalised their cause. That is, the right of the Irish people to fight for self-determination. But the Brits failed because the prisoners resisted that policy and went through a hell of a lot of torture in resisting that policy, and then the prisoners eventually went on hunger strike to try and break that deadlock. And by hunger strike the prisoners brought the attention of the world to Ireland. And the prisoners also completely destabilised the situation because they forced everybody in Ireland to have a position. And they destabilised British rule in the North and British influence in the South. By contesting elections, Bobby Sands and Owen Carron won a historic victory, and showed that the prisoners were popularly supported by the nationalist people. The prisoners refused to bend on the hunger strike. In fact the hunger strike was not defeated by the British government. It was subverted and undermined by the actions of understandably distressed relatives who were attacked and morally pressured into breaking the hunger strike by sanctioning medical intervention once their sons went into unconsciousness. The British government, I think, regrets not resolving the present crisis after the first hunger strike because the struggle in Ireland has been internationalised.

Can I ask you a question to do with elections? There now seems to be a real possibility that Provisional Sinn Fein will take over effective leadership of the Catholic population and, even if it doesn't become the undisputed leader, it is clearly going to be a powerful force which can win seats in elections. How will you make use of your electoral support?

We would participate in the electoral process, and I emphasise the electoral process rather than the constitutional process, for a number of reasons. Number one, for far too long the Republicans have allowed the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party — *ed*) to misrepresent the interests of the Nationalist people. We fought the war and they fought the elections, and as a result of that the Brits always had a ready-made available collaborationist party to represent the Nationalist community. And this had the effect of actually protracting the agony, of giving the Brits no reason to shift out of the situation, because whenever they called constitutional conferences, or had a Northern Ireland Assembly, they always had the SDLP to come along and talk with. So from a revolutionary point of view, by just participating in the elections we can ensure the SDLP have a

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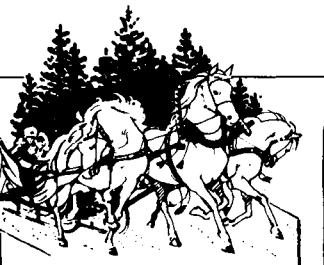

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hard job, and probably an impossible job, of getting into power, of representing the Nationalist people and then going along and doing dirty deals with the Brits. By participating in elections we can actively prevent that. Of course by participating in elections we can also win actual victories, and with Owen Carron — who's a member of Sinn Fein — as an MP, how can the Brits turn round and say the Republicans have no support? Their whole argument abroad is completely destroyed.

What about your policy of abstention, or not taking the seats you win?

We are abstentionists because we believe in the sovereignty, the independence of the Irish nation. There is no national parliament for the people of Ireland. So there is no chance of us taking up our seats when elected. There is no chance of us attending, we can see no useful purpose. Owen Carron would be one voice out of 635 voices in Westminster. Even if he makes good speeches like Bernadette McAlisky did, or even if he tears the hair out of some Home Affairs minister in the House of Commons, it's only a minor propaganda victory. Owen Carron at present is doing a hell of a lot of constituency work, he is working without any finance at all. Despite the fact that people in this country are forced to pay tax, and despite the fact that he's an elected MP, he gets no money at all from the British government, he does not even get dole because they won't give him dole, they say he won't make himself available for work. But he works 15 to 16 hours a day for the people of that constituency and he's even had problems brought to him from Protestant people now, which is a breakthrough.

What if there was some devolved assembly for Northern Ireland within the UK? Would you be willing to participate in that?

No. We'd totally refuse, we'd boycott the assembly. In the old days, we would have boycotted the elections as well. But there is a new attitude now. We think now that such elections should be contested and we should not allow the SDLP to go unchallenged. But there's no way would we go in and sit down and give the Brits the right to rule our country. The only time we will ever talk to the Brits is when they turn round and say 'we're getting out of Ireland, can you help us to get out quickly?'

What if there's a Labour government in power which makes some general commitment to a united Ireland, and calls a constitutional conference? What would be your attitude towards a conference like that?

Are you talking about a constitutional conference for *all* Ireland, because Labour cannot legislate, a British Labour government cannot legislate for the 26 Counties. Are you talking about a constitutional conference for the Six Counties, or for the whole of Ireland?

No, I'm asking what kind of constitutional conference you would agree to participate in. For example, suppose there was a constitutional conference called jointly by the British government and the Southern government...

Well, we would be very very suspicious of this, because it would be hosted by people who want to determine the political outcome of it. We would have to appraise that situation when we saw it. But it's too early yet, we have not reached that stage. We have not yet broken the will of the British government to stay in Ireland. The Brits have to recognise the right of the Irish people to self-determination, and they have to declare that they're withdrawing — politically, militarily and economically.

But suppose a Labour government declared its intention to withdraw? Unless there's to be a civil war between Protestant and Catholic there has to be a negotiated transition to a United Ireland.

That's right, that's right.

You would presumably be willing to participate in negotiations to achieve such a transition?

As long as those were exactly the parameters, and our principles were respected and met with then there is every possibility we would participate. But equally, we might be too suspicious of the process, if for example they wanted to bring in the UN. I mean the UN has been fucking about with Namibia for years now doing bloody nothing about it, actually covering up for South African invasions into Angolan territory. I don't think the UN has had a success yet, a successful transition of a country to nationhood yet. So we would be very highly suspicious of these internationalist organisations.

I don't think that there can be a capitalist United Ireland. The present 26 Counties is economically a disaster.

But you in principle recognise the need to negotiate the transition?

That's correct, yes.

There is a real possibility that a United Ireland brought about in this way would be a capitalist Ireland. Would you continue as a party struggling for a socialist Ireland or would you, like many traditional Republicans, regard your task as finished once unity was achieved?

Oh no, no, no. We are committed to the establishment of a democratic socialist republic. I don't think that there can be a capitalist United Ireland. The present 26 Counties is economically a disaster. It's owned by foreign investors. The political process is even controlled and to a large extend dictated by those forces. The unemployment rate in both North and South is very high, particularly in the North, and I think we believe that the process of uniting Ireland will unleash a new militancy in the Protestant section of the working class. They're not going to have this Loyalist fascist philosophy to adhere to. Hopefully they're going to turn around and become very militant and very left-wing, and there will be an identity of interest betwen them and the rest of the Irish working class. The workload obviously is immense, which has to be done to achieve a socialist republic, but we're committed to it. We are a very big force in Ireland, we have a hell of a lot of activists, we have come through an awful lot, and we don't intend just to surrender because the green of the tri-colour is flying over Belfast as well as Dublin.

But that does represent a change compared to the Republican position which saw its task as finished once the British were out?

For years we've been maligned as a Brits out movement. But that is not the case. We are a socialist movement and we are committed to a socialist republic. Because of the nature of this phase of the struggle there is not a great deal of emphasis laid on socialism. But during the process of getting the Brits out people have become very politically conscious. The youth, in both North and South, especially as a result of the hunger strike, have come right over to militant *socialist* republicanism, and that process will continue. □

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Channel Five

MUSICALS

Bruce Cole

In the theatre calendar, Christmas is one time when box office managers can hope to do well, especially if they are selling tickets for a musical. The musical nearly always enjoys a high seasonal success rate and, sure enough, this is promised by the billings for this December. No less than eight will be playing in the West End, with at least two substantial productions on tour in the provinces.

This may come as something of a surprise. The recession, which is not showing any signs of getting better, is hardly a safe climate for investment in something as expensive and risky as a musical. Yet the angels — the people who back these shows — have not taken their money and run. Rather, they have held on with a stubborn disregard for the dangers. There has to be more to it than a charitable love of the medium.

Two years ago, the press was full of reports of blacked-out theatres, of companies going to the wall because of cuts in their subsidies, of VAT increases pushing up the price of tickets. The causes of the disease are too complex to go into here, though the symptoms were clear enough. Audience figures fell to a point where it was no longer possible to meet the cost of maintaining a show. So they closed. Managements retaliated — as they did in many other industries — by offering incentives and packages; block bookings, season tickets and similar reductions. These tactics helped to revive the box office a little, but for the producers of a musical it was still not enough. For one thing, musicals were already relying on coach parties — the problem lay not so much in attracting more, but in keeping the ones they had. To make matters worse, the profit margins of a musical are smaller than for a play, for the simple reason that there are more performers on the payroll. While the cast of, say, *My Fair Lady*, is not over-large by itself, it does need bolstering by a dancing chorus of at least twenty (if it is going to look any good) and a thirty piece orchestra (if it is going to sound any good). These forces will swell the wages bill by £6,000 per week, not to mention the extra dressing rooms which have to be heated and lit, extra costumes and extra rehearsal. The musical, like space travel, is an all-or-nothing affair. There is not much point in starting out if you intend cutting corners.

What eventually served to keep this side of the entertainments industry ticking over was a new concept — new, at least, as far as the post war years are concerned. It was the revival. A glance through the last eighteen months' shows reveals a startling number of re-runs: *Oliver, My Fair Lady, The Sound Of Music, Oklahoma, The King And I*. A number of other things are revealed too. All of these shows are expensive to put on and flashy to see. All of them are at the lightweight end of the market; sentimental and escapist with, in nearly every case, a back-up of child performers. In short, this is the very stuff that attracts the coach parties. Most significant is the fact that they all belong in the 'top twenty' of long running shows, worldwide. In this instance, 'long running' means five years or more.

Fiddler on the Roof	1
Hello Dolly	2
My Fair Lady	3
Oliver	4
The Sound of Music	5
Oklahoma	8
The King and I	13

Only the top two have not been repeated. *Fiddler on the Roof* is perhaps not ready for a viable re-run, having last been produced in the West End as recently as 1967. The second longest, *Hello Dolly*, was only a success on Broadway and has since been overshadowed by its film version. This may sound suspiciously like the numbers game, which it precisely is. Paradoxically, in playing it big, managements are playing it safer. It may not be very adventurous, but it seems to be paying off.

These revivals last, on average, for a spectacular and money-spinning year and they are adding up to a trend for the 1980s. Their shortish life could be explained by the fact that re-runs are limited thing anyway. Also it would be unrealistic to expect a block-busting success the second time around, and during a climate of financial insecurity — a view borne out by the fact that only one musical remains in London which has been running for any appreciable length of time: *Evita* —which established itself before the recession. However, this is not the first time we have witnessed such a state of affairs. The last occasion was also during a recession, and this cannot be entirely a coincidence.

During the thirties, there was a remarkably similar pattern, both on Broadway and in the West End. This was the era of Gershwin, Cole Porter and Noel Coward, and while Wall Street crashed and the Royal Navy mutinied, the bands played on. Par for the course seems to have been around 300 performances — in other words, just under a year — which at any other time could be described as a flop. But the promoters were only too willing to repeat the process, almost as if it were a recipe for success. It suggests — as it suggests today —that there might be something financially attractive to managements in a packaged musical with a quick turnover.

As we have seen, the musical is an extremely expensive venture. In certain circumstances this can work to its advantage. Given enough song, dance and general razzmatazz there is a strong likelihood of capturing the attention of a dispirited public. Provided there is the massive investment to make the production bigger and better than the one before it will — like the Royal Wedding — be guaranteed a good turn-out. People who might not normally bother to cross the road for a musical like *Sweeney Todd* could well be persuaded to leave the telly and see *The Sound of Music* if it were live and starred no less a performer than Petula Clark.

If this reads a trifle sourly, it is because there is a disappointing difference between today and the thirties. Then, all the ephemera was new. Today we are apparently surviving on former glory. In a recent interview, Alan Jay Lerner, author of *My Fair Lady*, explained the difference between a hit and a success. A hit is briefly conspicuous. A success passes into theatre posterity. It is getting increasingly difficult to tell the two apart.

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Of the shows in production this Christmas, a great many are either revivals or have ridden in on the back of something else. *Annie*, with its heart-strings story of young girls in orphanages, more than adequately fills the slot left by *Oliver*. It moves to the Bristol Hippodrome on the 22nd. *Worzel Gummidge*, currently in rehearsal, is billed as a musical although I suspect it will be more of a pantomime based on the television series and aimed strictly at the kids.

For my money, there is nothing to match the audacity and originality of *Sweeney Todd*, which sadly closed over a year ago and deserved to last longer. Three musicals come close. *They're Playing Our Song* has, over the past year, been steadily propelled by its two stars, Gemma Craven and Martin Shaw, into one of London's best productions. It has the added bonus of a television plug every Sunday night when Mr Shaw takes on a completely different role as Doyle in *The Professionals*. *Evita*, which describes itself, perhaps over-pretentiously, as 'the world's greatest musical' is an experimental step in the right direction, with its rich orchestral colours and its utility staging. And *One Mo' Time* — the only all-American musical — proves that at least one thing remains unchanged. On stage the Americans are faster, slicker and zanier than anybody else.

And what of 1982? It is unlikely that many fortunes will be risked during the three months leading up to the new financial year and the thrills and spills of Sir Geoffrey's budget. But in the spring there is rumoured to be a new musical by that grand old man of the musical theatre, Alan Jay Lerner. With works like *My Fair Lady, Gigi* and *Camelot* under his belt, he is not one to engage his time in a possible flop. It will have to run through the next general election and beyond if it is going to become, by his own description, a success. Given the state of the musical over the last few years it looks as if the result of that election could make all the difference.

IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE REVISITED

Rodney Mace

Why is it, when we are in the midst of a grave economic crisis, that the Arts Council of Great Britain chooses to devote three or four months of the Hayward Gallery's space to the work of a relatively little-known British architect, dead these last forty years, Sir Edwin Lutyens?

The immediate explanation, besides the obvious one that the Arts Council's policy rarely takes cognisance of the more general situation, seems simple enough. Sir Edwin Lutyens worked almost exclusively for the rich, the super rich, and the state. His output over nearly fifty years of country houses in Surrey, thatched cottages on country estates, and occasional castles, follies, and city banks, made him the darling of his generation. *Country Life* magazine was to be his greatest promoter, both before and after his death. Lutyens' work embodied for this class, in a subtly didactic style, a comfortable and connected sense of a particular past: that of Tudor England.

Another important aspect of Lutyens is and was his failure to feature in any important way in the influential histories of modern architecture. That trio of modern movement ideologues, Nicholas Pevsner, JM Richards and Reyner Banham, relegated Lutyens and his school to the fringes, declaring that they had lost the fight against the morally superior and progressive tide of modernism. Lutyens was described as being tied inextricably to the coat tail of conservatism, while the modern movement was in the vanguard of European progress, as embodied in the politics of social democracy.

Lutyens found much 'modern' architecture disagreeable, and regarded writing on it — especially by a publicist like Le Corbusier — as little short of contemptible. In 1928 he commented waspishly on Le Corbusier's *'Towards a New Architecture'*:

> 'Mass production would destroy in man the sense of three dimensional habitation. He would lose the pleasure of thick soft walls, dumb to noise, when compelled to live in stark noisy little boxes, where skilled plumbers take the place of house-proud maids.' *(sic)*

In the same review, he offered this comment on Le Corbusier's famous phrase, 'Architecture or Revolution':

> 'To avoid Revolution great patience and long suffering must be endured. To produce Architecture it is the same. Sacrifice is essential and the worship of the absolute directed towards an inconceivable and ever-growing perfection.'

People living in badly built local authority housing would certainly agree with at least part of Luytens' first sentiments; and it would seem that the organisers of the Hayward show agree with the second.

There are two further possible explanations for the recent growth in 'appreciation' of Lutyens. The first could go like this: architects, like most cultural workers, are deeply affected by the present political crisis. Like all other workers at this time, they face the prospect of unemployment, and a fight for survival is on. This fight can be seen most sharply in the schools of architecture in the universities and polys, where professionals and their students, denied the coherent policy that went with social democracy, are resorting to an idealism that sets more store on form than on function. Taking notice of the social consequences of buildings, it is argued, has led nowhere. The architect's role as arbiter of taste, until recently disguised by social democracy, has been reasserted. The hegemony of the 'profession' is once again to go unchallenged.

A second, and perhaps more significant explanation is to do with Lutyens' Englishness. Modern architecture was intended to speak across national boundaries whereas the architecture of Lutyens and his school, firmly and unequivocally, stood behind the walls of a confident Empire. It is to this ruling class confidence, shot through with anti working class and racist sentiments, that the closet (and not so closet) Thatcherites who prompted this exhibition into being are appealing.

Let's take just one example from the exhibition to illustrate this argument a little more clearly: the building of a 'New' Delhi beside

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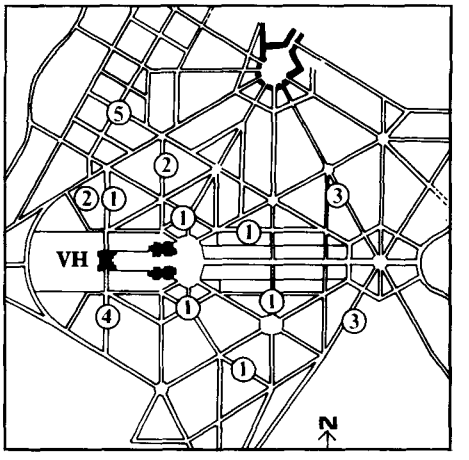
the old Mogul capital in the years 1913-1930.

The British had long been discontented with the port city of Calcutta as the main political centre of their Indian Empire. By 1900 this Empire stretched north to the Afghan frontier and south to Madras. Somewhere more central was sought. But the reasons that lay behind such an upheaval were more than simply administrative. Despite the apparent confidence of Empire, the British had real fears from the rise of Indian nationalism. Nationalism at this stage in India was not a revolutionary force in the sense that we might understand it today. Largely a bourgeois phenomenon, its threat to Britain's economic and political dominance was not yet great. More important was the threat to Britain's attempts at cultural hegemony. British imperialists had little choice but to accept that India had a past (something they deliberately ignored for the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara, for example). The problem that faced the Viceroys, and their architects Lutyens and Herbert Baker, was this: how were they to fit this undeniable cultural past into the grand design which depicted Britain as the standard bearer of world civilisation? Lutyens, although ambitious, had little experience in this field outside his own country, England; whereas Baker had very recent evidence of his skill. It was Baker, after all, who designed South Africa's new Union capital, Pretoria, and who, in 1912, wrote:

> 'The new capital is not merely the shrine of the glory of India, but it is to be the living centre of administration. First and foremost it is the spirit of British sovereignty which must be imprisoned in its stone and bronze... Britain's rule in India is not a mere veneer of government and culture. It is a new civilisation in growth, a blend of the best elements of East and West.'

The plan shows all too clearly that such a 'blend' was but mere mouthings by the British; buildings are rank ordered around a ceremonial route with Britain's surrogate emperor's palace as its focus. India in all its complexity was left outside the walls; the old city of Delhi was left to rot and the people to starve. In twenty years of its completion in 1930 the force of nationalism now with a broad working class socialist base had forced Britain to leave. Lutyens' £10 million pound gesture purportedly heralding a new age, was seen to be little more than the rattle of a dying culture. □

The centre of British power, the Viceroy's House (VH), standing at the end of a gigantic ceremonial route that runs East-West dominates a carefully segregated city of bureaucrats, 5000 in all, who literally dominated 300 million Indians. Of the Indians Lutyens said 'Their very low intellects spoil much and I do not think it possible for the Indians and whites to mix freely and naturally. They are very different... (and I) cannot admit them on the same plane as myself...



1 Gazetted Officers
2 European Clerks' Quarters
3 Rajas
4 Troops and Bodyguards
5 Indian Clerk's Quarters
VH Viceroy's House

THE INDIAN TOUR

Mihir Bose

On the evening that the President of the Indian Board of Control for Cricket announced that the England tour of India could at last go ahead, Mark Tully, the BBC's Indian correspondent remarked, 'Mrs Gandhi has realised that there are no votes to be got in cancelling the cricket.' If Tully had added 'particularly in the mid-term of a government that is not proving quite the outstanding success Mrs Gandhi had hoped for', he would have highlighted the political and sociological cross currents that have educated this controversy: should the presence of two players, tainted by South African connections, debar the rest of the England side? For in a manner that few of the ancient freedom fighters could have envisaged, the most characteristic symbol of the Raj they hated has, in turn, become the most honoured and loved game of the elite that replaced the Raj. So much so, that Indians now like to think modern cricket may have been derived from gilly-danta, an ancient Indian game of sticks and stones, rather than the sturdy men of Hambledon, as English myth has it.

It is a combination of the urban poor and the better-off, educated, urban elite that have nourished Indian cricket and made it the 'national game' in the country. Cricket's rise did not begin to manifest itself till the mid-50's just as the first generation of independent Indians were beginning to earn the rewards of the post-independence industrialisation. Even as late as the 1956 Australian cricket tour of India it was possible to just saunter into a Test ground on any day and get a ticket. But from the 1958-9 West Indies' visit to India, the privilege of watching a Test became very much part of the essential social ritual of the urban elite. Interestingly in that winter of 1958-59 India suffered one of her most devastating defeats at home, but that, and subsequent humiliating encounters at home and abroad did little to dent the growing popularity of the game. In an almost comical illustration of the Indian masochistic yearning, the heavier the defeat the greater the lust for cricket. For by then cricket was more than a game: it had become part of the urban culture. It was one sure source of pleasure and excitement in an environment that provided few escapes from poverty and tradition.

Cricket with its long structured series of matches, its ritual, its ability to produce occasional surprise, its essential rhythms, seemed ideally suited for the Indian temperament. With huge stadiums in the centre of cities, carefully segregated into the members' enclosure and the rather more primitive hoi-polloi stands, it brought together the contrasting seams of urban Indian life. For the urban poor it was, next to Hindi films, the place for dreams; for the elite it was a sure means of establishing their social position.

There had been another factor. Post-independence India had little time for the Maharajas and princes who had prospered so well under the British. Their patronage had nourished Indian cricket. As their power declined they were replaced by a new princely class: the generation of Indian industrialists who had made the most of the economic and social opportunities provided by Nehru's India. One by one the great cricket teams maintained by the princes declined, one by one they were replaced by great commercial sides — almost every Indian industrial captain worth the name

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has a cricket side — competing in tournaments hosted in major Indian cities. Jawarhlal Nehru provided the ultimate gloss by regularly participating in the annual parliamentarians' match in Delhi and recalling his own cricket days at Harrow.

The rise of cricket has meant that other sports have been completely subordinated to it: even hockey, a game in which Indians were unquestioned champions for over four decades. It was significant that during the present controversy surrounding the England tour, a few, sympathetic to sports other than cricket, expressed hope that the tour would be abandoned: for once, cricket would not hog all the limelight and money. Yet such is cricket's hold, and the nature of the Indian elite, that it would have required something much more emotive than the South African issue to get the tour cancelled.

For though publicly the Indian government has always been totally against South African apartheid — as an issue it rarely generates much interest. The Hindu caste system is, in any case, based on the old Aryan perception of colour, the Indian fetish about 'fair colour' can be seen almost every Sunday in the columns of matrimonial advertisements looking for 'fair brides', and generally the Indian elite has a hunger for pragmatic answers to problems. For this elite it was sufficient that India had no truck with South Africa and solidly supported the African line at the international forum. To ask for something that would actually mean a sacrifice on India's part seemed to be going too far. In fact, as the controversy over the tour built up, the Indian sporting press filled with support for the English cricket authorities.

Extending the fight against apartheid to individuals who visit South Africa for sports or cultural reasons is a new development not fully understood in India. Thus Boycott played cricket in India in February 1980 after he had toured South Africa. Indians asked: so what had changed since then to make him a pariah?

The answer lies in the way apartheid has been dealt with — or not — by cricket. Till 1968 cricket (and only six countries play test matches: Australia, India, England, New Zealand, the West Indies and Pakistan, Sri Lanka will become a test-playing country next February) was effectively divided between South Africa who played against Australia, England and New Zealand, and the rest who played against one another.

That summer we had the 'D'Oliveira affair'. Basil D'Oliveira, a coloured South African, unable to play cricket in his native land came to play in England. He did it so successfully that he became a regular member of the England side. However, despite a match-winning performance in the last Test of the summer (a match that England had to win in order to square the series), he was not selected to tour South Africa. When one of the players dropped off, D'Olivera was chosen as a replacement. Mr Vorster alleged that his last minute choice represented a concession to anti-apartheid groups and cancelled the tour. Since then South Africa has been effectively barred from international cricket. Amidst great controversy the 1970 South African tour of this country did not take place — and this approach seemed to have received the sanction of governments in the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement. Then heads of the Commonwealth governments affirmed their resolve to discourage sporting links with South Africa. It was widely understood by the sporting authorities that this meant no team links, but that individuals could still go and play in South Africa.

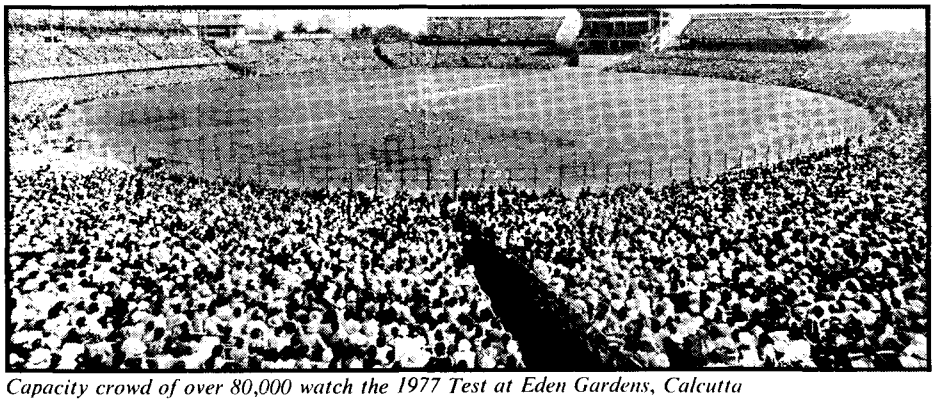

photo: Patrick Eager

Capacity crowd of over 80,000 watch the 1977 Test at Eden Gardens, Calcutta

However, the selection of Robin Jackman for England's West Indies trip earlier this year — again a last-minute replacement for an injured player (Willis), revealed that anti-apartheid groups wanted to ban even individual contacts with white South Africa. Jackman, who has strong South African connections, was deported from Guyana. England declined to play the third Test scheduled there and for a time the entire West Indies trip seemed to be in the balance. Again, after much political discussion, the governments of Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua and Montserrat decided that the rest of the tour could go on.

The fall-out over the Jackman affair could not be contained so easily and the Indian tour was in doubt from the moment the Guyanese government banned Jackman. The question revolved round the implications of the less than precise Gleneagles Agreement. Did it extend to individuals?

Yet the wider issue remains. For underlying this is the deep divide in cricket between the perceptions of the white nations and the black ones when it comes to white South Africa and its apartheid policy. Before 1968 the English cricket authorities justified their policy of playing with South Africa on the grounds that this formed a valuable 'bridge-building' process and that white South Africans by coming into contact with liberal, multi-racial Britain would eventually learn that races could live together in harmony and pride. Yet for all the sugary rhetoric of Lord's the policy did little to dent apartheid.

And, even after 1970, when it seemed unlikely that white South Africa could ever play international cricket again, the white cricketing nations refused to accept the argument of the non-whites in South Africa that 'there can be no normal sports in an abnormal society'. Thus, through most of the 70s and even as late as last year, Lord's, helped actively by New Zealand, assured the white cricket authorities in South Africa that if they modified their own apartheid rules, then South Africa might be welcomed back. This reached a climax at last year's meeting of the International Cricket Conference (cricket's ruling body), when it was agreed that the white South African cricket authorities could present their case for re-admission. The fall-out of the Jackman affair, and the inclusion of Sri Lanka as a Test-playing country effectively dashed such hopes. For Sri Lanka a coming of age means the black nations (India, Pakistan, the West Indies and Sri Lanka) have a ICC majority over the white (England, Australia and New Zealand).

Had India banned Cook and Boycott because of their South African links it is possible that the cricket world would have polarised between the white and black nations — white South Africans seemed to hope that such a polarisation would take place. But even though this has not happened it is evident that white English cricketers will think again before casually embarking on such visits — more so if they want to play for England. It is inconceivable that the English cricket authorities will easily select cricketers who regularly visit South Africa. And that, at least, is a gain. □

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Finishing the Floorboards, 1895, by Gustave Caillebotte, the Louvre Museum, Paris — Photo by Photographie Giraudon.

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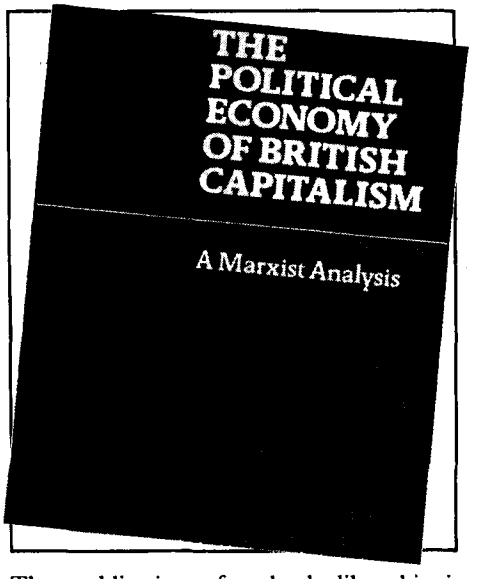
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BRITISH CAPITALISM: A MARXIST ANALYSIS
Sam Aaronovitch and Ron Smith with Jean Gardiner and Roger Moore
McGraw-Hill 1981
ISBN 07 084 121 7
pp416 pb £7.95



The publication of a book like this is testimony to a certain maturity in modern Marxist political economy. It is now perhaps fifteen years since the revival of interest in Marxism began in this country. Its first fruits were an intensive study of the works of Marx himself, and vigorous theoretical debate. More recently, however, the focus of attention of Marxist economists has moved towards more practical questions and the vigour of theoretical discussion has declined. Amongst British Marxists, a major concern has always been to understand the specific characteristics of British capitalism and the reasons for both its past strength and its currrent weakness. Now we have, for the first time, a book which attempts to integrate the results of that analysis into an overall picture, whilst taking due account of the many more orthodox theories that have been put forward in this field. With the publication of this lengthy but thoughtful work, Marxist studies of the nature of British capitalism should be able to take off from a more solid base.

The virtue of the book is not that it is bristling with new ideas: it is not. But it makes a systematic effort to sift through and assess old ideas, the exact significance of which has never been entirely clear. Moreover it has been carefully written so as not to intimidate the uninitiated reader, in the best tradition of textbook writing. Thus, even though everyone will find something to quarrel with, it should quickly find a niche for itself as a point of entry for the many people who would like to know more about the political economy of British capitalism, but simply do not have the time and energy to get deeply involved in the debate.

The book is divided into five sections entitled respectively Background, The State, International Capitalism, Capital and Labour. It attempts to dovetail quite sophisticated analysis with elementary explanations of economic categories. Thus Chapter Five on 'the use of economic evidence' is sandwiched between a fourth chapter on 'class' and a sixth on 'the relative decline of the UK'.

I have little doubt that the explanation of the recent history of the UK economy will be what catches the attention of most readers, and what excites most controversy. The very rapid slide of the UK down the international scale of productivity and living standards must be one of the central issues of British capitalism. Why has it occurred? One view, which has been advanced by both Marxist and non-Marxist writers, is that British capital has been so hard pressed at home by working class militancy that it has been unable to invest profitably and efficiently in this country. This view bases itself on evidence of low and declining profitability in the UK, and on the strength of trade unions in this country, particularly at shopfloor level (eg, the existence of a powerful shop

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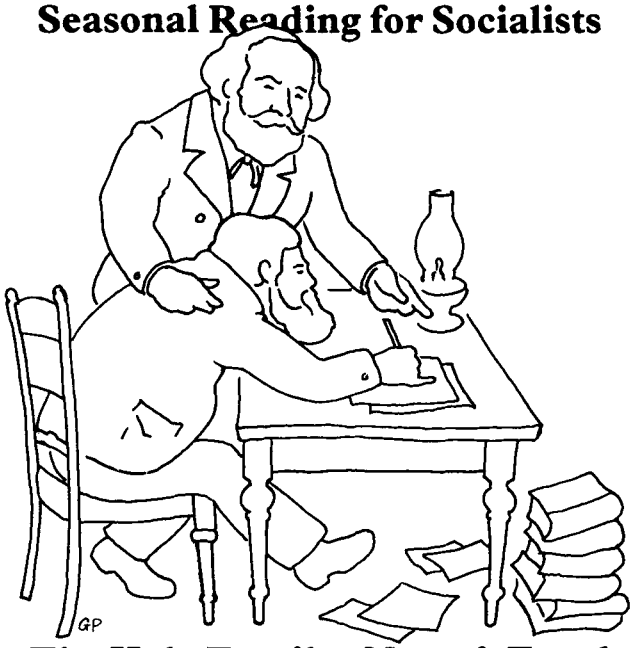

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stewards' organisation). The major political problem with this analysis is that it is easily bowdlerised into a simple statement that the trade unions are the cause of British economic problems — a conclusion which the Right is naturally quick to draw.

Another view, with a long tradition behind it, stresses the international dimension of British capitalism. For historical reasons, the foreign assets of British capital far exceed those of French, German or Japanese firms, and are surpassed only by those of US capital. It is argued that concern for the global interests of British capital has restricted the British state in its struggle with its own, national economic problems. Fear of retaliation by other countries, for example, has ruled out highly nationalistic solutions which would cause the access of foreign capital to the UK market to be restricted over an extended period of time.

Broadly, then, there exist two approaches: one which stresses the special characteristics of British capital, and the other the special features of British labour. There is no necessary conflict between these two analyses: it is perfectly possible to argue, for example, that EEC entry would have been less damaging to the British economy with a less militant and less well-organised working class. *The Political Economy of British Capitalism* takes this sort of line. It acknowledges that the strengthening of the trade union movement during the war meant that a lower rate of exploitation was established in the UK than in some other major countries, where trade unions had been smashed or severely weakened by fascism or occupation. But it also argues that the strategic political decision to take up the standard against communism as a junior partner of US imperialism had severe economic disadvantages. Apart from heavy military expenditure and the balance of payments cost of overseas commitments, the sudden Korean War rearmament damaged the economy for years to come by diverting resources from exports and investment projects. The authors are surely right to stress the importance of this episode in scotching any possible dynamic benefits from the 1949 devaluation.

Nevertheless it could be argued that these political decisions were taken more out of a sense of duty to the defence of capitalism as a global system, in line with US strategy, than out of a concern for particular British overseas interests. There was certainly a lot of US pressure, including no doubt threats of various measures against British capital, but the positive reasons for the strategy were that Britain, as a victor nation, politically stable and with a global empire, should give a lead to Europe in taking an active but subordinate part in US policy. Thus the delusion that Britain was still a world power was probably more important here than the international orientation of British capital.

More fundamentally, the book does implicitly raise a question about the unique contribution of Marxism to economics. For much of the analysis is carried out without using specifically Marxist concepts, and many of the arguments are not unknown to orthodox economics. What, therefore, is the exact theoretical role of Marxism? In many ways the book raises more questions than it answers on this issue. It seems that the Marxism emerges not so much in the strictly economic material as in the appreciation of the interconnection between economics, politics and the wider aspects of society in a world of clashing class and sectional interests.

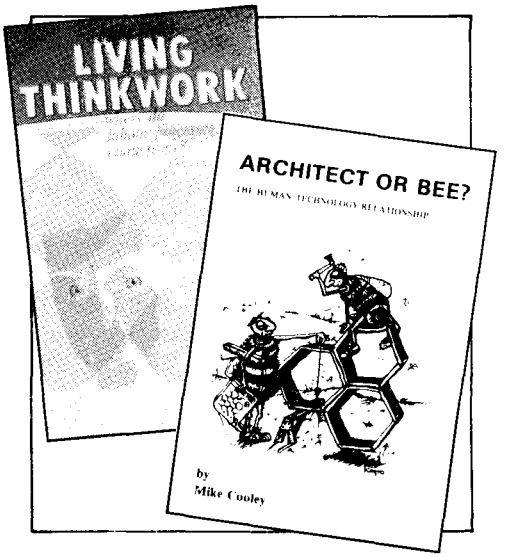
Reading the book, I had the strong impression that it was modelled on a well-known textbook on applied economics widely used in first year economics courses in universities and polytechnics. The deliberate simplicity of style and the drive towards a comprehensive coverage bear witness to a concern for the student market. There is nothing particularly wrong in this, although occasionally one yearns for a little light relief. Perhaps a book to dabble in rather than to read straight through.

Michael Bleaney

ARCHITECT OR BEE? THE HUMAN/ TECHNOLOGY RELATIONSHIP
Mike Cooley
Hand and Brain Publications 1980 pb £2.50
ISBN 0 907118 00 3

LIVING THINKWORK: WHERE DO LABOUR PROCESSES COME FROM?
Mike Hales
CSE Books 1980 pb £3.50
ISBN 0 906336 15 5

The major themes of *Architect or Bee?* will be familiar to anyone who has kept even minimally abreast of ideas arising from the British labour movement over the last decade, especially those that bear on the nature and future of technical work. Cooley's book is in fact a collection of some of his speeches and articles, all of them marked by a distinctive synthesis of his socialist commitment and theory and his experience as an industrial designer. The sayings and concrete examples by means of which Cooley has focused the attention of many individuals and groups — workers, trade unionists and



others — are here in plenty. On technical advance: 'We have senior automotive engineers who sit in front of computerised visual display units "working interactively to optimise the configuration" of car bodies to make them aerodynamically stable at 120 mile an hour when the average speed of traffic through New York is 6.2 miles an hour. It was in fact 11 mph at the turn of the century when vehicles were horsedrawn'. And on technology, human needs and waste, he sharply counterposes the almost 7 million people who live in semi-slums in Britain to the fifth of a million people who have worked in the building industry who are unemployed. Production for social use is close to Cooley's heart, and problematic as the concept of 'use' may be, he has no difficulty in demonstrating that the present production system does not operate to fulfill many peoples' needs.

Again and again Cooley stresses that 'Science and technology is not neutral': it is not neutral in terms of the products that it yields and nor in terms of its application to work and working conditions. 'The historical tendency', he tells us, is 'to deskill *all* work' — including, he says to his fellow technical workers, *yours*. Many of those interested in the labour process might want to question the view that there is a ubiquitous tendency for jobs to be deskilled, but there is much to be said for judging the book in its own terms. It is a useful, critical and socially concerned introduction to technology and the labour process, the various parts of which it is good to have on paper and between two covers.

Cooley's vision, then, is one in which all jobs are deskilled and in which, in the most sophisticated intellectual work, even 'the natural biological process of growing old is now to be treated as a crime which must be economically penalised' (so, for some, it's not a matter of 'too old at 40', but of too old

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at 23). Cooley has no doubt that the actual work content and the more or less immediate control function of scientists and technicians *via-à-vis* direct production workers are deeply enmeshed in capitalist social relations (he adds the now familiar point about the USSR, 'scientific management' etc). However, increasingly, he sees scientists, technological and professional workers to share a common plight with manual ones, and a common interest in a future society in which they too can fully engage, live out their potential and contribute usefully. The Lucas Corporate Plan, with which of course Cooley has himself been intimately engaged, does not figure large in this book, which is something of a disappointment, as is the omission of a clear statement of what Cooley sees to be its limits and possibilities. Rather his stress is on the lessons that such a Plan can teach, and on how the 'feel' and formal scientific knowledge of technical and other workers can potentially be fulfilled in socially useful production — though the relation between these groups of workers is not spelt out here.

Whatever the limits of the Lucas Plan, Cooley *is* trying to push *something* forward. Hales is trying too, but his is a very different book. 'A very personal book' he calls it, and it is. At the bottom of Hales' theoretical contribution, however, for part of the book contains such, is the notion of 'preconceptualisation'. This is an impressive enough term to get across the way in which 'thinkworkers' (process design engineers etc) structure the work-world and consciousness of process (and other) workers, so that it takes on the appearance of a technically ordained and eternal reality over which, in the absence of considerable effort, they have little purchase. How this happens is worth spelling out in detail, even if it should come as no surprise except, as Cooley bluntly puts it in his book, to those who have 'no understanding of the manner in which scientists and technologists are used as mere messenger boys of the multinational corporations whose sole concern is the maximisation of profits.'

The performance of the labour of preconceptualisation constitutes, in its consequences, a fetter and a threat to the working class. Yet, as Hales argues, how socialism can be won in industrialised countries without the working class *and* 'thinkworkers' working at it together is hard to see. That this working together can be very hard to achieve as well, hardly needs spelling out here. Is it not, for example, a common criticism of alternative plans like the Lucas one that manual and clerical workers are relatively uninvolved? And what became of the ICI shop stewards' paper *ChemCo News*, the origins of which Hales describes and which he helped to develop as part of his own attempt to resolve theory and practice and bridge the thinkworker/working class divide? Perhaps rather than dwell on the negative aspects, though, we should remember that the 1970s did bring some new initiatives. And as for Hales' self-reported blindness and naivety as a creamed-off working class lad, with a first class degree and a PhD in operational research, who discovered socialism late, went back to ICI as an OR specialist to put his socialist theory into capitalist practice, and got the sack — well, as for Hales, there's not only a cruel lesson to be learnt from him, also a sign that the 'messenger boys' sometimes read between the lines of the messages they are paid to deliver, and sometimes want to re-write them.

Theo Nichols

NOTES

CRITIQUE CONFERENCE

Mick Cox writes: Since its foundation in 1973, *Critique* has created a forum for serious, specialised discussion of the Soviet Union and other related societies. It has attempted to stimulate debate and critical self-examination about the nature of these societies, opening its pages to a wide range of writers and engaging in debate with all trends on the European and American left; speakers from the journal have also participated in the Communist University of London.

The aim of *Critique,* however, has always been wider than just the analysis of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and we are, therefore, organising our next conference on the theme of 'The Political Economy of the New Cold War.' The general purpose of the conference will be to analyse the parallel crises in the major areas of the world system. Major discussions on the new militarism, the USSR in the present crisis and the historical differences between the 'old' and 'new' cold wars will form the basis of later workshop debate.

Speakers include: Mary Kaldor, Dan Smith, Fred Halliday, Tariq Ali, Mick Cox, Hillel Ticktin, Martin Shaw, Sandy Smith, Mike Haynes, Phil O'Brien, Lionel Cliffe, Peter Lawrence, Andrew Gamble, Moshe Machover and Frank Furedi. The conference begins at 7pm on Friday 15 January 1982 and continues all day Saturday 16th; it will be held at the University of London Union, Malet Street. The weekend fee is only £3.00 and advance registration is advised. For further details contact: *Critique,* c/o 31 Cleveden Road, Glasgow G12 0PH.

RACISM AND THE POLICE

Dave Cook writes: 'Without knowing it at the time we were looking at the whys and wherefores of what was to explode shortly afterwards on the streets.'

These words from the introduction to a new Communist Party pamphlet *'Black and Blue'* — Racism and the Police edited by Dave Cook and Martin Rabstein, emphasises the prophetic character of the proceedings of the conference on the same theme held earlier this year. The contributions are centred on the experience of police racism, ranging through a scene-setting opening by Stuart Hall to interventions by Basil Manning, Ian Martin, GS Dhesi, Tony Bunyan, Stephen Sedley, Dorothy Kuya, Winston Pinder, Nazim Ul-Haq, Brenda Kirsch, Neelim Zabit, Vishnu Sharma, Avtar Jouhl and Martin Rabstein.

The inclusion of the detailed 'Charter of Demands' on Racism and the Police, put forward by the Communist Party and introduced by Dave Cook, gives a campaigning edge to this timely and attractive pamphlet.

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The Socialist Society

Working Group for a Socialist Society, c/o 7 Carlisle Street, London W1. Tel 01-437 8240

We believe that there is an urgent need for a new Socialist Society, dedicated to research, debate, education and polemic. We are convening a Conference early in the New Year for the purpose of founding such a Society.

The aim of the new Society will be to regain the initiative for socialist ideas and help them become the common sense of the age. It will contribute to research and educational work allied to the labour movement and other progressive movements. It will seek to counter the reactionary ideologies bred by the persistent capitalist crisis and the new Cold War. It will seek to promote awareness of socialist alternatives and encourage debate on the strategic and policy dimensions of socialist research and theory. It will work to break down barriers between activists and intellectuals. It will develop its own workshops, local groups, programme of publication and national network, while making use of every available platform for advancing socialist culture. It will work closely with already established socialist and radical research groups.

We believe that a new and more open political situation offers great scope to socialist researchers, teachers, writers and activists. We have a rich diversity of socialist publications and research groups but no common meeting ground for discussing the new prospects facing the labour movement, or for allowing us to contribute collectively to the birth of a broad socialist movement. Within the labour movement top-heavy official structures and the water-logged politics of consensus are being strongly contested by local activists. There are encouraging signs of the beginning of a wide-ranging and outward-going response to the many desperate problems of a decaying social order. The dramatic re-birth of CND on a new European basis, and the widening scope of the women's movement and of feminist programmes, raise vital issues of socialist responsibility and commitment.

In a more diffuse way there is a widespread willingness to question the workings of the British state, the commercialism and paternalism of the media, the savage cuts in social provision, the continuing war and repression in Northern Ireland. There has been manifest popular anger at mass unemployment, the desolation of inner cities and the destruction of industrial and cultural resources. There is a growing wish for more democratic and accountable structures of self-activity in every area of social life. The search for new answers gives new openings for the Left and could furnish the impulse for building a popular, anti-capitalist movement. Yet, so far, the Social Democrats have been able to make the running in public debate and exploit discontent with the traditional pattern of politics.

FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

23/24 January

Institute of Education

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We believe that the formation of a new Socialist Society could help the Left to meet the great challenge and opportunity it now faces. Without seeking to create a new party or faction the Society would encourage socialist renewal inside the labour movement and help those fighting for socialist ideas in the Labour Party. It would help create a new forum and common framework for considering fundamental questions of socialist programme and purpose. It would address itself to the implications of new radical currents of thought. It would bring together intellectual workers and worker intellectuals, in the common task of developing the programme and promise of socialism. It would be open to all those prepared to subscribe to a Charter of socialist principles.

Working Group for a Socialist Society:

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Please send me registration documents for the founding Conference of the Socialist Society ☐

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The founding Conference of the Socialist Society will be held in London in January, 1982. If you would like further information, please fill in this form and return to: Working Group for a Socialist Society, 7 Carlisle Street, London W1V 6NL.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Working Group for a Socialist Society'.

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